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THESIS – THÈSE

Title of Thesis – Titre de la thèse

The Multigenerational Family Residing in One Household – A Case Study Approach

Degree for which thesis was presented
Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Masters

Year this degree conferred
Année d'obtention de ce grade

1985

University – Université

University of Alberta, Edmonton

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THE MULTIGENERATIONAL FAMILY RESIDING IN ONE HOUSEHOLD: A CASE STUDY APPROACH

by

DOROTHY GRIFFITHS

C

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1985

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ABSTRACT

The present research addressed the issue of multigenerational families residing in one household, where the two adult generations were involved in sharing child care. A case study approach was employed to investigate four areas. Firstly, the organizational patterns around the child care function were investigated to determine adult roles. Secondly, what interaction and communication patterns were evident in family members with particular reference to symmetry and complementarity. Thirdly, the hierarchical structure and establishment and maintenance of appropriate boundaries were determined. Fourthly, on the basis of the family's interaction and communication patterns, what rules could be inferred about the multigenerational family's interactional system? These objectives were accomplished by means of a semi-structured interview and an assigned task. Data was collected from three volunteer families.

The specific variables of family functioning which were measured by means of the interview and by observation and analysis of the family during the interview session and the assigned task, included - the clarity of the subsystem boundaries, the organization of the hierarchical structure, the patterns of symmetrical and complementary interactions and the member's participation in the interview session.

Analysis revealed that the three families were supported in the executive function by the grandparent generation, boundaries were generally clear and roles and responsibilities clearly delineated. A relationship between symmetrical and complementary interaction pat-

terms and inferred family rules provided information on the roles of different family members.

This research, being a descriptive case study and exploratory in nature, has its limitations. Generalizations of the findings are limited, but the overall approach appears applicable to the study of families, and their relationships to kin, at different stages of the life cycle. Implications of the findings for family counselling interventions and suggestions for future research are presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to the following people who offered assistance and support throughout the writing of this thesis.

I would like to thank Dr. D.D. Sawatzky, my committee chairman, for his willingness to listen and his provision of encouragement, guidance and support.

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. R. Liburd, for her helpful suggestions, warmth and continued encouragement, and Dr. N.L. Hurlbut, for her insightful advice and thoughtful questions.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the three families for their willingness to share their experiences and for the generous giving of their time.

I would like to thank my own extended family, my mother, brother, sisters and their families, for their generous provision of child care and emotional support throughout the preparation of this project; and Norm and Jo for their helpfulness and interest in this research topic.

To my friends, Norma, Angie, Denise and Terry for the emotional support and helpful advice which they offered; to Judy, Linda, Marg

and Donna, for their provision of child care, without which this work would have been more difficult to complete; and to Bev for her continued encouragement, willingness to listen and generous giving of self and time; thank you.

To Ted, for being a constant and consistent source of support and encouragement and for understanding when the long hours away from home prevented me from helping out; to Jennifer and Vicki for their sweet assurances, hugs and kisses, and patient understanding that mommy "will be home soon", my heartfelt thanks.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	General Statement of the Problem	1
	Overview of the Problem	2
II.	REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH AND LITERATURE	7
	Systems Thinking in Family Theory, Therapy and Research	7
	General Systems Theory	7
	The Family as a System - Structural Family Theory	10
	Subsystems, Boundaries and Hierarchy	13
	Interactional Communication Patterns in the Family System	16
	Family Rules	20
	The Family Life Cycle	21
	Background on Issues Relevant to the Multigenerational Family	22
	Patterns of Intergenerational Relationships	28
	The Middle Generation	28
	The Older Generation	32
	Family Therapy and the Multigenerational Family	36
	Summary of Related Research and Literature	39

III. METHODOLOGY..... 41

General Procedure and Design..... 41

Subjects..... 42

Pilot Study..... 44

Interview Protocol..... 45

Data Collection Procedures..... 46

Data Analysis..... 48

IV. FINDINGS..... 49

The A. Family..... 50

Roles in the A. Family Household..... 53

Executive Functioning, Hierarchy and the Clarity of Boundaries..... 55

Task..... 58

Interactional and Relationship Patterns Among Adult Members in the A. Family - Symmetry and Complementarity..... 59

Family Rules..... 63

The B. Family..... 64

Roles in the B. Family Household..... 67

Executive Functioning, Hierarchy and the Clarity of Boundaries..... 68

Task..... 70

Interactional and Relationship Patterns Among Adult Members in the B. Family - Symmetry and Complementarity..... 71

Family Rules..... 73

The C. Family..... 74

Roles in the C. Family Household..... 77

Executive Functioning, Hierarchy and the Clarity of Boundaries..... 78

Task..... 81

Interactional and Relationship Patterns Among Adult Members in the C. Family - Symmetry and Complementarity..... 82

Family Rules..... 85

V. DISCUSSION..... 87

Analysis and Discussion of the Research Questions..... 87

Research Question 1..... 87

Research Question 2..... 91

Research Question 3..... 93

Summary of Findings..... 94

Implications for Counselling..... 96

Implications for Future Research..... 98

Delimitations..... 100

Limitations..... 100

REFERENCES..... 101

APPENDIX A..... 109

Interview Protocol..... 110

APPENDIX B..... 115

Task..... 116

APPENDIX C..... 117

Informational Letter..... 118

APPENDIX D..... 120

Consent Forms..... 121

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this present study is to investigate families of three generations who are residing in one household and centres on the organization of the family around the issue of child care. The overall intent of this research is to examine the issues arising out of multigenerational families, self-described as normal and well-functioning, living together in one household, where the middle generation is involved in the expansion phase of the family life cycle and the older generation in the post-parental phase (Terkelsen, 1980). By means of a descriptive case study approach roles, rules and patterns of interaction in such family structures will be explored.

According to the systems perspective, each family member plays a significant role in determining the organization of the family and the family rules. Therefore, how each family member communicates and relates to other family members will be examined. This objective is to be accomplished by means of a discovery-oriented research process, involving the collection of interactional data from the subject families via a semi-structured interview and an assigned task. Although families are studied in institutional and clinical settings, there is little research that is carried on within the family home (Bott, 1971). Therefore, the

families participating in this study are interviewed in their own residences. The data is analysed according to the systems interaction perspective (Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1967) and Minuchin's (1974) structural family therapy.

Overview of the Problem

Statistics indicate that the number of multigenerational families residing in one household has declined from the 1950's to the present decade and that only 5% of the total number of households can be considered extended family dwellings (Statistics Canada, 1984). However, as a consequence of increasing longevity and societal complexity, Sussman (1971) views the three-generation family as a viable alternative in an increasingly pluralistic society. It is reasonable, he states, that there should be a variety of family structures and living arrangements providing more options for self- and group-expression. Currently, therefore, "the main challenge for research in this area is to determine the meaning and significance of kin network activity for variant family structures at different stages of the family life cycle" (p. 590).

Lee (1980), reviewing the knowledge that has been generated in multigenerational studies throughout the decade of the 1970's with regard to interaction between kin and the exchange of mutual aid between kin, notes that :

> Changes in kinship have occurred in both obvious and subtle ways, and these changes have profound implications for individuals, families and societies. These changes do not mean that kinship is becoming unimportant, but rather that it is important in different ways than was true in the past. The

process of explaining how and why individuals associate with kin, and how kin relationships affect individuals and families has really just begun (p. 931).

The multigeneration or extended family residing together has traditionally been seen primarily as an ethnic occurrence. Macklin and Rubin (1983) note the extent of contact and support of family members across the generations in black families and other ethnic minorities, but note few studies of middle-class, mainstream families who are living multigenerationally. Because of the great variance in family types existent in North American culture, there are both theoretical and empirical reasons to conceptualize multigenerational families as family systems with their own structures, norms, internal processes of boundary reorganization and family rules.

When two or more families come together to form one household, there exists a need to reorganize boundaries and change family rules. The family can accommodate to this change in a positive or negative manner. Hess and Waring (1978) note the importance of the contribution of added family members in terms of increased income, household help, babysitting and other services that enhance the well-being of a family. They stress the positive contribution that such a family arrangement might offer. But the stresses can be felt in a more problematic manner — financial worries, lack of privacy, conflict at life cycle stages, communication, and problems or concerns around child-rearing. Roles and responsibilities of family members may be altered; stress and resentment may be felt. Problems may accrue in living together where issues of dependency and separation have not been resolved. Particularly acute are the problems of boundary ambi-

guity when two or more adults and two generations are involved in child care. Thompson and Gongla (1983) call for systematic research into understanding the nature, extent and effects of this boundary reorganization in families in transition or families that are considered outside the norm of the nuclear family.

Family arrangements where grandchildren are present may have definite implications for the family depending upon the reasons for such an arrangement (divorce, unwed motherhood, economic hardship) and the caretaking responsibilities handled by the adult members (Beck & Beck, 1984). Family researchers and theorists state that for optimum functioning in a family, it must be clear who is in charge (Minuchin, 1974). Where there are two or more adult generations the question of hierarchy is pertinent in regards to the executive function. Who is in charge of the children or how is this function shared? There are a diversity of problem situations that can arise where parents and grandparents may be sharing some of the parenting responsibilities. Generational boundaries must be clearly separated.

In this investigation, the three families studied were at important phases in the life cycle. For the young parent or parents, dealing with the demands of raising small children while living with a member of the third generation can raise issues of differentiation and dependence. For the older generation, having already reared a family, the presence and care of young children can thwart individual needs. The relationships between the adult members of these families, then, are important to study. Hagestad (1981) notes that this is an area where

more research is needed.

> The quality of bonds between adult men and women and their parents deserves much more attention than it has received. There is voluminous research on early childhood and adolescence, then the relationship is dropped and not picked up until the parents are old and the children middle-aged. The quality of ties and especially patterns of reciprocal socialization, in the 20-30 year period between these two stages is grossly under-examined. We know more about the influence of infant and mother than we do about this process between adults in their thirties and their parents (p. 33).

Research by Beck and Beck (1984) indicates that multigenerational households are relatively common in the United States and a similar occurrence may be true in Canada. Their study found that 50% of black middle-aged couples were found to have formed extended households and 20% of the white families studied had also lived multigenerationally at some point in their life cycle. By studying longitudinal data over ten years (1966-1967) and comparing it to cross-sectional data from 1966, they discovered that the incidence of multigenerational households was double the proportion found in the earlier study. Census data provides information on the prevalence of extended households at different points in time, but there is little or no information on the proportion of households that become extended over a period of time. Therefore, these types of households may be more common than was previously thought.

Herr and Weakland (1978) forsee an increase in three and even

four generational family living in the oncoming decades as a result of increased longevity and societal complexity. The main reason to form three-generational households is largely financial. During recessions or periods of economic deterioration, with high unemployment, there is a noticeable trend for families to move in with one another. In times of affluence, statistics indicate a move away from multigenerational living. Privacy is valued instead.

In summary, the objectives of the present research were to examine the organization of a multigenerational household around the child care function. Families involved in the study were white, middle-class, mainstream families, self-described as normal and well-functioning. These types of households have not been extensively studied (Macklin & Rubin, 1983). Through a descriptive case study approach the researcher hoped to add knowledge to the area of the organization of these multigenerational households; knowledge which could be useful in providing information for counselling interventions.

CHAPTER II

THEORY AND RELATED RESEARCH

This study is based on the concepts of family systems, emphasizing the structuralist approach of Minuchin (1974) and Minuchin and Fishman (1981) and Watzlawick's theory of communication patterns (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967; Watzlawick, 1976; Watzlawick & Weakland, 1977; Watzlawick, 1978). These theories will be reviewed in this chapter. Also, a review of the research on multigenerational families will be presented, including characteristics of this type of family living arrangement, ecological considerations, and patterns of intergenerational relationships.

Systems Thinking in Family Theory, Therapy and Research

Many family theorists and therapists study the family as a system. This section will examine the theoretical base from the perspective of von Bertalanffy's (1968) concept of general systems and Minuchin's (1974) structural approach to the family as a system. The works of Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967), focusing on the communication process within these systems, will also be presented.

General Systems Theory

Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a biologist, proposed the general systems theory in 1945. His theory sought to elucidate principles which would be valid for all systems, to provide a framework for looking at

seemingly unrelated phenomena and to explain underlying patterns. "There appears to exist general system laws which apply to any system of a certain type, irrespective of the particular properties of the system and of the elements involved" (von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 37).

According to von Bertalanffy (1968), a system is "a complex of inter-acting elements" (p. 55), a complex of component parts, none of which stand in isolation but which influence and in turn are influenced by other related parts. The system's perspective stresses the relationship between the parts; these parts can best be understood as a function of the total system, and in order to understand the system and its component parts, a study of the transactional processes must be undertaken.

According to von Bertalanffy, there are two kinds of systems. Firstly, there is a closed system which admits no matter from outside itself, maintains no interaction with the surrounding environment and exhibits entropy, the tendency to reach the simplest possible state from whatever the starting situation. Closed systems have impermeable boundaries. Secondly, there is an open system, characterized by a continuous flow of material, energy or information with the surrounding environment, and with boundaries that are at least partially permeable.

Open systems are characterized by three properties. Firstly, a system is not made up of independent parts but rather interdependent parts. Therefore, a system is not the total sum of its parts but is characterized by wholeness and organization. A system, as in the family, is not the sum of the individual personalities, but the vital, ongoing interaction between them. A second property of an open

system is the relationship among the parts. The various parts can be understood best as functions of the total system and in order to understand how something works one must study the transactional process taking place among the component parts, how one influences the others and is reciprocally influenced (von Bertalanffy, 1968). In a family, the members can be studied in terms of the connections between the individuals to see how they relate. The third property of a system is equifinality meaning that no matter where one begins, the conclusion will be the same. "The same final state may be reached from different initial conditions and in different ways" (von Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 40). Two or more systems may reach the same steady states from differing original conditions, or conversely, may reach different steady states from identical beginning conditions, and each system itself will provide the best explanation for how it evolved in that particular manner. Equifinality is the ability of open systems to maintain the same steady state with different inputs, as for example, families which tend to have their set method of functioning regardless of what is happening around them, or what information and energy is coming in from the outside.

Another general characteristic of a system is that it exists as part of some hierarchical order of systems; each higher or more advanced level is made up of systems of lower levels. General systems theory is applicable to all living systems, from the simple level of cell organization to the complex level of interrelationships societally.

The component parts of a system relate through a process of

feedback which maintains the system's functioning. Feedback is not devised from a linear cause-effect model but from a cybernetic or circular mode. According to the concept of feedback a change in one of the system's parts results in other changes in the system. Eventually, the original change is either negated (negative feedback) or enhanced (positive feedback). Negative feedback corrects a system which is in trouble and re-establishes its previous state; whereas, positive feedback increases deviation from a steady state. All interactions between people may be viewed as feedback loops, because the behaviour of each person involved affects and is affected by each other's behaviour (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). The systems approach emphasizes the behaviour of an individual within a context in which another person or persons is present and exchanges information with that individual, each influencing the other. There is a circular movement of parts that affect each other, but no beginning or end to the circle. Each person's behaviour is simultaneously caused by and causati[illegible] of behaviour in another part of the system. A system is constantly changing as new input information is fed back into the system and alternatives are made in response to the new input.

The Family as a System - Structural Family Theory

The characteristics of the general systems theory can be applied to the family. Minuchin (1974), influenced by von Bertalanffy's theory, developed the structuralist approach to family therapy. "In essence, the structural approach to families is based on the concept that a family is more than the individual biopsycho-

dynamics of its members. Family members relate according to certain arrangements which govern their transactions. These arrangements, though usually not explicitly stated or even recognized, form a whole -- the structure of the family. The reality of the structure is of a different order from the reality of its members" (Minuchin, 1974, p. 89).

The family system's activities and functions determine the structure or organization of the family. By observing how members interact within the family, the family rules and roles can be determined. Structuralists are concerned with how the family communicates rather than what they communicate. Process is more important than content.

This model analyzes the individual's psychological and behavioural makeup by focusing upon the influences family members have on one another from that individual's earliest life to the present. These experiences within the family govern the range of each family member's behaviour. The family is a social unit that moves through distinct stages of development; during each stage new developmental tasks or challenges must be met. Each stage calls for a reorganization of the family system and is usually accompanied by changes in functions among members. Members must learn to mutually accommodate to numerous small routines. Patterns of transactions are developed to maintain or change each others' behaviours.

The normal development of any family is characterized by certain changes or crises, such as childbirth, first child going to school,

adolescence, nest leaving, retirement. Other stresses such as separation, divorce, illness, unemployment, financial difficulties, addition or loss of a family member, may provoke additional family crises. In order to adapt to these changes the family must develop new patterns of interaction (Minuchin, 1974). Functional families handle these crises by maintaining an openness and flexibility. By handling these crisis periods, new interaction patterns are developed and the family evolves to a more complex level. Healthy families support and nurture the socialization of its members by providing support, allowing for differences, supporting a positive sense of identity and helping members differentiate. In dysfunctional families, however, the normal developmental crises are not viewed as opportunities for change and growth. Rather, these families continue to use old familiar patterns of behaviour and behave as if nothing has changed. Symptomatic behaviour in one or more family members can develop in order to maintain family homeostasis. The old system remains intact in spite of the changed family situation.

In order to understand the family, a structural family therapist is interested then in how the members of a family interact, how balance or homeostasis is achieved, how the family feedback mechanisms operate, and how dysfunctional communication patterns develop and continue. This structure of the family is the invisible set of functional demands that organize the ways in which family members interact. Repeated transactions establish patterns of how, when and to whom to relate and these are the patterns that underpin the system (Minuchin, 1974). As characterized by Minuchin (1974), the

structure of the family can more readily be understood in terms of its subsystems, boundaries and hierarchies.

Subsystems, Boundaries and Hierarchy

All systems have structure, function and evolution and are organized into a more or less stable set of relationships. Systems execute certain actions and are continuously in the process of change. Within a system are organized specialized units which carry out distinct functions in an effort to maintain themselves. These units are subsystems.

Every family system contains a number of co-existing subsystems. These subsystems can be formed by generation, by sex, by interest or by function. Minuchin (1974) identifies three subsystems typical of most families: the spouse, parental and sibling subsystems. In some families a grandparent subsystem may also be in evidence. Each family member can belong to different subsystems simultaneously, and can learn new skills and exercise different levels of power. Because each family member belongs to several subsystems simultaneously, members enter into different complementary relationships. For example, a man can be a husband, father, son, younger or older brother, nephew or grandson, depending on the nature of his relationship to another person within that family system. In each relationship he plays a separate role, the function or behaviour which is expected or is characteristic of him in that particular setting.

In the family system, the husband/wife subsystem is basic.

If there are any problems within this subsystem it will affect the entire unit, possibly resulting in children being scapegoated or co-opted into alliances with one parent against the other. Changes that need to happen do not occur and the family does not move to a higher level of development. If the spousal subsystem is more functional, however, changes are handled so that growth can occur and the subsystem can provide a model for the growing child regarding intimacy and male/female relationships. The parental or executive subsystem, which may include a grandparent or an older child, is involved with childrearing and offers nurturance, guidance and control. It must be clear from this subsystem just who is in charge, and from this subsystem the child learns to deal with authority and with people of greater power. The sibling subsystem contains the child's first peer group where the child learns the skills of negotiation, co-operation and competency, skills which are helpful in assisting the child to cope with peers in the extrafamilial environment of school, activities and later of work.

Extended family members may also enter into the family system. Grandparents, aunts, uncles may enter to support, guide or organize the new functions in the family, or the nuclear family may strengthen its boundary to keep undue interference out (Minuchin, 1974).

The family system differentiates and carries out its functions through subsystems. Each individual belongs to different subsystems in which the individual has different levels of power and where different skills are learned. The distinction between one subsystem and another is referred to as a <u>boundary</u> and is defined by the rules which determine who participates with whom, under what circumstances,

and how this participation will proceed. Boundaries must be clear and well-defined for proper family functioning, allowing for differentiation without undue interference and at the same time allowing for contact and support between family members. Boundaries may be permeable or impermeable. They denote a point of transition where difference can be observed in structure, function or behaviour on either side. Subsystem boundaries may become overly rigid such that contact is discouraged or not allowed at all, or they may become diffuse so that there is no clear distinction in functions between parents and children.

The function of the boundary is to protect the differentiation of the system. Every family subsystem has specific functions and makes specific demands on its members. In a family system such information as who sits where, who interrupts or completes information, who confirms or disconfirms, are all "soft" data that give a tentative map of family coalitions, overinvolved dyads or triads and other structural patterns (Minuchin, 1974). The clarity of the boundary is a useful parameter for the evolution of family function.

This clarity of the subsystem boundaries is an important consideration in examining the hierarchy existant in a family system. In a family system one person has more power and responsibility to determine what happens than another person; parents are higher in the hierarchy than the children. Minuchin (1974) emphasizes the importance of this hierarchical organization of the family. Generational boundaries, he states, must be clear; adults and children need to know who is in charge and the parents must be

in a superior position to the child. Hierarchy is defined as the repetitive sequences of who tells whom what to do. Parents and children have different levels of authority. There must also be a complementarity of functions, with the husband and wife accepting interdependency and operating as a team.

A parental subsystem that includes a grandparent or a parental child can function quite well, as long as lines of responsibility and authority are clearly drawn. A boundary must be drawn that allows the child access to both parents while excluding the child from the spouse functions. Parents cannot carry out their executive functioning unless they take the power to do so.

Minuchin (1974) found that extended families were a highly significant model in many poverty-stricken areas, and that they need not be termed pathogenic. Extended families allow for the sharing of functions and chores and can provide companionship and emotional and financial support. Extended families may run into problems, however, if responsibilities are not allocated clearly, if boundaries are vague, if it is not clear who is in charge or if there is a crossing of generational boundaries. Families must have an executive subsystem that can make decisions particularly with regard to children and to their changing needs. The parental subsystem must have authority and must be clearly able to set limits for the growing child.

Interactional Communication Patterns in the Family System

Families, to function effectively, will have clear separation of the generations, flexibility within and between roles and direct

and consistent communication among all family members (Minuchin, 1974). In order to understand the functioning of a family system, family theorists and therapists study the family's interaction to discern repeating patterns. Although the content of the message can be significant, the setting and process evident in a conversation provide much necessary information. Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) proposed five axioms of human communication which provide a basis for recognizing and analysing these communication patterns.

Firstly, they state that all behaviour is communication. Therefore, all behaviour occurring when a person is in the presence of another has some sort of message. Even an individual maintaining silence is communicating. Communication is more than what is said; it includes posture, gesture, tone of voice and context. It is impossible, then, not to communicate.

Secondly, all communication is characterized by providing a content or informational component and a relationship component. This latter aspect provides information about how the content level is to be understood by the participants. For example, the statements "I'm concerned about your coming in late" and "You are never on time, you inconsiderate oaf" define the relationship between communicants in quite a different manner. Even the same sentence, spoken in a different tone or with special words emphasized, can imply a different relationship. For example, "I want YOU here" or "I want you HERE." It is the relationship level of communication (or metacommunication) that determines whether or not the communication patterns will be healthy and functional or will create confusion, impasses or paradoxes (Watzlawick, et al., 1967).

Thirdly, the character of a relationship is closely connected with the punctuation of communicational sequences between members. It is not always clear in a series of interactions what is stimulus and what is response. Thus a husband may complain about the slowness in having his shirts laundered, while the wife may delay the laundering of his shirts because of his complaints. If members organize or punctuate these sequences differently, they may blame the other for the resulting problems instead of communicating about the communication.

Fourthly, Watzlawick and his colleagues (1967) distinguish between two types of communication -- digital and analogic. In digital communication, facts are communicated by the use of the spoken or written word. The meaning of the message is clear from the nature and ordering of the words. For example, "Dinner will be served at seven" or "The Jones family bought a new red station wagon." In analogic communication, however, attention is paid to the non-verbal messages as indicated by gestures, facial expressions, vocal tone, and other aspects of body language. It may also include other forms of contact such as caresses, kisses, hugs, blows or any other physical touch. The manner in which people present themselves or dress can also indicate the way relationships are defined among people. In order for communication to be clear, the digital and analogic components need to be congruent.

Finally, interactional sequences are classified as either <u>complementary</u> or <u>symmetrical</u> as determined primarily by the relationship between two or more people. Symmetrical interactions imply equality; participants mirror each other's behaviour. If A boasts,

then B boasts and this pattern may escalate into competitiveness. These relationships are based upon equality of behaviour. Pathology in a symmetrical relationship is evidenced by heightened competitiveness which results in quarrels or arguments or can lead to a deadlock or mutual rejection. It is possible for the competitive aspect of symmetrical communication to be altered by change to a complementary mode.

Complementary interactions imply inequality. The communicant's behaviour tends to maximize differences so as to create a "one-up" and "one-down" position or a pattern of one as a "giver" and the other individual as a "receiver." Examples can be that of an employer-employee, master-servant, doctor-patient, or when one member is assertive and the other is submissive. If a complementary relationship becomes pathological it leads to disconfirmation. This is the giving of disinterested, illogical, irrelevant or contradictory responses which discount the person's definition of "self" leading to feelings of frustration and helplessness (Watzlawick, et al., 1967).

In functional families both patterns of symmetrical and complementary communication exist and these two patterns stabilize each other by way of flexible alteration or operation in different family circumstances. Members relate symmetrically in some areas and complementarily in others. In dysfunctional families symmetrical escalation and rigid complementarity are in evidence and can lead to rejection and disconfirmation instead of acceptance and confirmation. Therefore, by studying these patterns of interaction, family theorists and therapists can determine the degree of health

or dysfunction in a family and define steps to support or remedy the transaction.

Family Rules

The orderliness of interactional patterns in a family is rule-governed where family members behave in organized, repetitive patterns (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1980). Rules provide the skeleton of the nature of a family system (Dodson, 1979) and are usually implicitly rather than explicitly stated. An example of an explicit or an overt family rule might be "Children are not to interrupt when an adult is talking"; whereas, an implicit or covert rule might be "When anger between mother and father escalates, youngest son distracts by having an asthma attack." The family regulates itself according to these rules which are formed and modified over the family life cycle. They are guides for defining "who participates and how" (Minuchin, 1974, p. 53). These governing principles in a family system are relatively few in number. By understanding the rules in a family one can understand how they define the relationships in that group.

In functional families, rules promote a smooth, efficient kind of stability for the entire system and facilitate accommodating to individual change implicit in the family life cycle. A degree of variation is allowed so that flexibility is enhanced and most situations can be negotiated without changes or developments leading to a crisis. In dysfunctional families, rules may be rigid, out-moded and growth-inhibiting, leading to problems and crises within the family.

Family rules are created in the beginning of any relationship. In a marriage when two people come together, spouses expect the transactions to take the form with which they are familiar from within their family of origin. They will attempt to organize their spouse along preferred lines. Accommodation to a new or changed set of family rules must occur or if each maintains adherence to a rigid set of rules, problems will accrue. If a third generation enters into a nuclear family, this generation must be accommodated, resulting in different rules for a changed circumstance.

Family Life Cycle

In studying any family it is necessary to know what phase in the family life cycle they are experiencing as different problems are associated with the different life stages. All families pass through more or less similar developmental phases such as marriage, birth of the first child, first school attendance, last adolescent leaving home, retirement and senescence (Terkelsen, 1980). As new members are added to the family, the family must reorganize its family structure. As families mature, relationships change and grow. As the family moves through the difficult developmental phases, it needs to accomplish different family tasks in order to move to the next phase. Minuchin (1974) states that most families who seek therapy are experiencing difficulties in making the transition from one phase to another and are not, he asserts, pathological.

During each phase of family life, developmental tasks associated with changing role demands and changing social-emotional needs can be identified. In the phase of expansion, a couple

must deal with the developmental crisis of parenthood. In this phase children are born into the family and the new parents must deal with the tasks of supporting and nurturing their growth. Other issues may also arise such as possible reduced family income; problems of agreement between spouses regarding birth control, pregnancy, child care and discipline; the problem of dealing with rivalries between children; the problem of dealing with one or the other parent's overinvolvement with the children; and the need for greater interdependence within the spousal unit (Terkelsen, 1980). At the other end of the family life cycle, the older generation, in the post-parental phase must deal with such issues as retirement, loss of children as they leave home, aging, loneliness and the prospect of death. It is also a time when adults are able to focus more on their own interests and needs as they are freed of the demands of raising children. These phases of the family life cycle are characterized by a range of appropriate behaviours on the part of each family member.

Background on Issues Relevant to the Multigenerational Family

This section will examine the multigenerational family as defined by Litwak (1965) as consisting of a coalition of a nuclear family in a state of partial dependence with kin, exchanging services with each other and yet retaining considerable autonomy (p. 291). The characteristics of the multigenerational family in general will be examined as will the multigenerational family residing in one household. Emphasis will be on issues of contact, aid, privacy and patterns of intergenerational relationships.

Family therapist Murray Bowen (1978) writes that in dealing with any family we are always dealing with at least three generations. Even though the majority of families in our culture consist of two generations residing in one household, families carry with them the imprint of their families of origin. This third generation can be a strong and powerful influence of positive or negative impact (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973; Bowen, 1978). From sociological studies of the family, findings indicate that across social strata and within diverse subcultures the modal family arrangement in North America is that of the modified extended family, a multigenerational family either sharing a common household or living close enough to exchange tangible resources and help and assistance (Shanas & Streib, 1965).

Sociologists in the first half of this century, notably Parsons (1949), argued that there was little contact between nuclear family members and extended kin. The family was seen as isolated with little interaction with elderly members who, for the most part, remained alienated and rejected. Nuclear family systems were thought to predominate in industrial societies because of required high rates of geographic and social mobility, the necessity for universalistic rather than particularistic criteria for job placement, the greater importance of achieved as opposed to ascribed status characteristics, and the greater differentiation of other, non-family social institutions which an industrial society creates to meet the individual's and family's needs (Lee, 1980). The nuclear family was seen as better adapted

to an industrial economy, whereas, the extended family was seen as more common among societies with an agricultural economy.

Shanas (1965) and many other researchers investigating this theory found that families are not isolated from kin, that there exist high rates of contact and considerable exchanges of goods and services between parents and their adult offspring. In addition to socializing together, families typically exchange help along generational lines, and most people turn to their kin when problems arise. Help may take the form of financial assistance, gifts, services, advice and counselling. Some help is given on a regular basis (such as, child care, transportation, shopping, housekeeping) while other aid may be offered during occasions of celebration (anniversaries, graduations) or crisis (hospitalizations, funerals). Between the generations, help flows both ways. Older parents may assist their children or grandchildren with money, counsel, or babysitting. While declining health and finances may sometimes make the aged dependent on kin for support and services, older family members are generally generous with their resources. Adult children may, in return, assist with home health care, maintenance, transportation or money.

Help and services across the generations is a continuing feature of family life. Shanas (1979) notes that the sharing of a home by older parents and an adult child is a form of help although it is not usually reported as such by older people. Such home sharing may mean that the older parent is providing shelter and care for unmarried, divorced or widowed adult children. As adult children

have children of their own they reach a better understanding with their parents; turning to parents for help seems to become easier (Shanas, 1979). For members of the third generation, as they become unable to provide for their own needs, they continue to turn first to their children for care and services.

It is not uncommon, therefore, for the generations to share a common residence or even a common household, particularly during the period just after marriage when the young couple has not achieved economic self-sufficiency, or later in the family life cycle when the parents of the adult offspring are no longer able to live alone. Typically, such living arrangements are asymmetrical and the three-generation family is comprised of the parents of the daughter rather than of the son. Also, it is rare that two intact spousal units would reside together in the same household for any lengthy period of time, privacy being an especially important consideration in such cases.

Qualitative aspects, which are not as easily measured, such as support, encouragement and affection, are also exchanged. Hagestad (1981) states that emotional support by adult children is now more important than financial support in maintaining gratifying intergenerational relationships. The living arrangements of the generations and the resulting contact between them is significant. In terms of demographic data, most older people (65 years and over) live within the community, only about 5-6% reside in institutions. About two of every three older men are married and living with their wives; one of three women are married and living with their husbands (Brody, 1973). Shanas (1980) states that as high as 18% of these

people live in the same household with one of their children. Although she finds that the proportion of older people living with their children has decreased over the last twenty years, the proportion living close to their children has increased. For example, 62% of older persons reported living within walking distance of one son or daughter. The elderly want to live close to their children, but most want to maintain independent households, what Shanas (1979) terms "intimacy at a distance." It is not that the elderly do not value close family ties, as the reason they choose to live independently, but that increased affluence has enabled them to do so. Both older people and their adult children place a value on independent living and "privacy." During the postwar era, as income rose, people's demand for privacy followed suit; it became more desired and valued. Hagestad (1981), contends, also, that the family is no longer the tight economic unit it once was with economic cooperation as the cornerstone of family cohesion and solidarity. "The twentieth century has freed generations from many of the economic interdependencies, through child labour laws, the mobility of an urban-industrial society, and a new emphasis on intragenerational economic cooperation with two spouses working. Social security, pension plans and social welfare programs have made the old increasingly economically independent of the young" (p. 26).

Macklin and Rubin (1983) argue, however, that these provisions do not work for everyone or at every period in time. "Any discussion of future alternatives or alternative lifestyles must take into account the bleak national economic picture. According to various

demographic predictions, the present economic situation is not expected to improve dramatically within the present decade" (p. 303). Macklin and Rubin (1983) predict an increase in extended family residential patterns to account for troubled economic conditions. Ethnic studies have shown that multigenerational family living has traditionally been employed by black families and other minorities to pool resources. The elderly, particularly, may be unable to maintain independence in the face of social service cutbacks, decreases in benefits and fluctuations in inflation. Unable to stay in their own residences, senior family members may be forced to live with relatives. With financially insecure times, adult children may return home as well. Single or divorced parents, or parents where both wife and husband are working outside of the home, may need to take advantage of the provision of child care which can be provided by grandparents. The authors conclude that more nonethnic, that is, white, middle-class, mainstream families may adopt this alternative lifestyle, leading to a a growing diversity within nonethnic families and more similarities between ethnic and nonethnic families.

Particularly in the past three decades there has been a marked shift from the traditional nuclear family of husband, wife and children to a variety of different family forms. This does not indicate a major decline in the proportion of people who reside in the traditional nuclear family, but suggests that throughout the entire life span, membership in such nuclear families [redacted] less continuous than in the past (Beck & Beck, 1984). There is little support for the theory of the isolation of the nuclear

family or the alienation of the elderly. This often prevalent societal idea that older people live alone or are institutionalized, with infrequent and strained contact with their offspring and other kin is not true for the majority of families. While relationships are not without some stress, research indicates that most families maintain fairly consistent and meaningful contact (Morgan, 1981). It is significant to examine the relationships between these generations to determine roles and patterns of closeness and conflict.

Patterns of Intergenerational Relationships

The relationships between the generations have been documented primarily from the viewpoint of the female participants. There is very little research investigating the roles and participation of male members. This section will examine the dyadic relationships between the different groups.

The Middle Generation. Lee's (1980) research found that wives were expected to be more active in the maintenance of kin ties than husbands (except in decisions about extending financial aid to kin); wives were also often expected to be responsible for maintaining contact with the husbands' kin. The reverse of this occurred very rarely. As well, women were found to communicate more often with kin than men, and husband's interact more frequently with their wive's kin than with their own. This is more true for the working-class; obligations are allocated more equally among the middle-class. Daughters provide a larger number of hours of assistance to their parents than do sons. Family contacts, therefore, are most often

with the female members of the family who also provide most of the services needed.

Sixty per cent of the families sharing residences do so with the wives' parents (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981). There are two reasons for explaining this greater tendency. Firstly, there is found to be greater conflict between a woman and her in-laws than between a woman and her own parents. Secondly, having lived together for so many years, mothers and daughters typically have reached some compromise regarding desirable ways of keeping house and rearing children, issues that would have to be negotiated from scratch if the residence or household were to be shared with the husband's parents.

Much of the popular literature concerning conflict in the mother-daughter relationship refers to the period of early adulthood before the daughter becomes a mother herself (Bernard, 1975). "The affectional ties between women and their mothers often grow as the daughters themselves become mothers and old hostilities become mastered" (p. 151). A woman's own mother is generally the first most important influence in her own psycho-social development towards becoming a mother herself (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981). However, there also may be interpersonal conflicts between adult children and their parents which are long-standing and which can affect the relationship. Where there has been a history of rejection, alienation, argument or other such conflict, there may be little willingness to help each other.

Friday (1977) states that the nature of the mother-daughter tie shifts across adulthood and this developmental process has

not been studied in detail. The author concludes that little girls in our society are taught to be mothers not women and are encouraged in the maintenance of an undifferentiated relationship. This early socialization leads to conflict between mothers and daughters during adolescence and young adulthood, but seems to be resolved with increasing role complementarity as the young adult becomes a wife and then a mother herself. "When women have children of their own they begin to feel much more empathetic with their mothers. They realize what their mother's life was like. They forgive whatever obscure angers have plagued them in the past and they become more loving and close. Especially if they have a daughter. There is a strange kind of direct line between mother, daughter and granddaughter" (p. 441).

Motherhood represents a particular challenge to a woman's sense of identity. The developmental issues involved in caring for young children recall relevant unresolved conflicts in the young mother's own pre-adult development. Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) studied the interpersonal relationships between middle-aged mothers and their grown daughters (themselves the mothers of small children) in their analysis of four modified-extended families within the Italian-American community in a metropolitan area in New England. The authors found that issues of interdependence or appropriate closeness between mothers and daughters was problematic for American women, given that they are responsible for rearing their own children as well as the maintenance of kin relationships. In their book, they illustrate how patterns of mother-daughter relationships, established during a woman's childhood may be continued after the daughter is

grown and even transmitted to the granddaughter. Issues such as the nature of the daughter's identification with her mother, the extent to which she has resolved the identity conflict of late adolescence, and the degree of comfort shown in her continued use of her mother as a source of support and nurturance, all were used as evidence of the extent to which the daughter has been able to adapt to the continuing interdependence which characterizes the relationship between adult women and their mothers. In this study the authors found that daughters seek emotional refueling and security from their mothers due to the stresses of parenthood. Friday (1977) concurs, noting that young mothers seek help and practical advice from their own mothers, and long for an emotional bonding. "Now, more than any other time in our lives, when we hold our helpless baby in our arms, we cannot afford the old anger at mother. Ironically, mom herself is mellowing, becoming more like the mother we always hoped she would be" (p. 442). However, if the grandmother is concerned with her own issues of aging, retirement and identity, this dependency of the daughter can become a source of conflict.

Although there are many studies which have focused on this mother-daughter bond, there is limited research on the characteristics of the husbands living multigenerationally. Sixty per-cent of these men would be living with their wive's parents (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981). The ties between the daughter and her mother, the husband's mother-in-law, do not appear to strain the marriage, because the husbands in these families are also very involved with their wive's families and support maintenacne of closer ties between wives and mothers. Cohler and Grunebaum's (1981) study

shows these husbands had sought marriages that would provide such extended family support, as in most of their backgrounds there were no such close family ties. In these circumstances, husbands and wives generally maintain satisfying relationships with each other. There is little conflict regarding the wife's mother, unlike the stereotype presented by the standup comedian. For the wife, contact and closeness with her mother, at this point in the life cycle, often takes precedence to that with her husband (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981).

The Older Generation. Again the significance of the grandmother-daughter tie has been studied more extensively than that of the grandfather-son tie. Elderly people, especially mothers, are more apt to reside with daughters than with their sons. They form closer relationships with their daughters than with their daughters-in-law.

The post-parental phase of the life cycle is generally a good time for the grandparent generation. Having raised a family, other avenues of interest are open to them. This is also the stage in the life cycle where individuals can focus more on themselves. As people grow older they become concerned with their own "internal" life and with the task of coming to terms with aging and death (Terkelsen, 1980).

Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) found that an important source of conflict for the grandparent generation was that offspring expected continued advice and assistance which the grandparents were unwilling to provide on a continuous basis. Offspring reported feeling rebuffed by their parents at a time when their need for help and advice was greatest, that is, during the early years of child-rearing. "Be-

cause of their reluctance to accept once more the obligations and responsibilities associated with parenthood, many middle-aged mothers feel ambivalent in responding to their daughter's continued requests for advice and assistance in caring for their own young children" (p. 53).

Unfortunately, the daughter's need for help and assistance is intensified as a result of her assumption of the parental role at just about the time when her own mother is preoccupied with her own aging. Most of the people over the age of 50 are in the "empty nest stage" where they can finally devote themselves to their own needs and interests. As Brody (1973) points out, parental care-giving responsibilities may conflict with expectations of leisure and independence from familial responsibilities in the retirement years. For some individuals, however, the experience of the empty nest creates depression and demoralization (Treas, 1975). Women seem to experience a crisis of purposelessness when their days of active mothering are behind them. The usual prescription for such problems is the substitution of new roles for lost ones. Women may become involved in a new career, return to school, become involved in community affairs or develop new interests or hobbies. This seems to be true particularly of middle-class women who establish a separate identity from their roles as wives and mothers. Many lower-class women, instead, may maintain closer relations with grown children, providing housing for young newlyweds, or care for grandchildren (Treas, 1975).

Bernard (1975) ascertains that, taken as a whole, the grand-parent role does not appear to be one that is particularly a source

of pleasure for the older person. Other researchers (Hess & Waring, 1978; Hagestad, 1979) found there was much ambiguity in how grandparents perceived their roles. Grandparents were often highly critical of how grandchildren were reared, usually feeling that modern day parents were too lenient.

According to Kornhaber and Woodward (1981), there exists a "new social contract" between grandparents and their adult children that neither will interfere in the lives of the other. They refer to this as a "hands off" policy -- grandparents have neither the right nor obligation to take an active part in the socialization of grandchildren. Their study involved gathering data from 300 grandparents and grandchildren. Results indicated that fifteen of the grandparents were intimately involved with their grandchildren and fifteen were totally detached, with the majority intermittently involved. They ascertained that the basis of this "new social contract" is not mutual support but mutual independence, that no one is obliged to anyone else, that emotional support equals "meddling" and giving advice or opinions equals "controlling" or "interference." The contract rests on the assumption that intimacy equals weakness. Thus the contract exists to prevent emotional bonding from taking place and the result is that many older adults are grandparents in name only with no real attachment to their grandchildren, especially after the grandchildren have grown past early childhood.

This quality of the relationship to grandchildren seems to depend on such factors as the grandparent's age (which can range from the upper 30's to the 90's) and that of the grandchildren, as well as the authority of the grandparent in the family structure.

Closeness and indulgence between grandparent and grandchildren occur in those families where the grandparent dissociates him or her-self from authority in the family; where the grandparent exercises authority over the parents, relations tend to be more formal (Riley & Foner, 1968).

Neugarten and Weinstein (1964) distinguish five styles of grandparenting: formal, fun-seeking, distant figure, substitute parent and reservoir of family wisdom. The latter two styles are rare, for few grandparents assume care of or authority over grandchildren. Although some grandparents, especially younger ones, foster playful relations, most exercise greater reserve, maintaining a concern, but see the grandchildren only rarely. As the grandchildren grow older they are likely to have even less contact with their grandparents. One-third of the grandparents in this study reported finding their role uncomfortable, disappointing or unrewarding.

When ties of grandchildren and grandparents are close, these closer associations are most often with the maternal grandparents. This is because in most families, the middle generation of women views kin contact as more important and plays a more active part in maintaining the kinship system than does the middle generation of men (Bott, 1971). Hartshorne and Manaster (1979) found that, despite geographical distances, ties with grandparents are typically maintained. Shanas (1980) found that even though most grandparents do not share a household with one of their children, 84% of those aged sixty-five and over, live less than one hour away from one of their children, four-fifths see an adult child as often as once a

week and two-thirds as often as every other day. Seeing adult children often means seeing grandchildren at the same time.

Family Therapy and the Multigenerational Family

Brody (1973) notes that increasing attention is being paid to the concept that older family members play important roles in family dynamics. "In recent years excitement has been generated by reports in the press and professional literature about the inclusion in family and network treatment, of family pets, friends, grocers, neighbours, teachers and so on. Grandparents have had a few bit parts, usually as the heavy, but have not yet made it big" (p. 23).

Bach (1980) states that in terms of family therapy, the elderly are often ignored or relegated to secondary status or regarded negatively. The focus of most family therapy is on the nuclear family and its differentiation from the families of origin. Grandparents are invited in to assist with the growth and development of the nuclear family or if they are living with the nuclear family, their involvement is then supported, but not so much for their benefit or personal growth but for the benefit of the nuclear family. There is a danger of stigmatizing, stereotyping and relegating the elderly to a role where only their impact on the nuclear family is considered important. Indeed, and often unfortunately, the literature and case studies of the extended family and of the involvement of the elderly, is described in negative terms. Families seen in therapy may be there because of problems exacerbated by crossing of generational boundaries and problems associated with the family

of origin, but it also seems to be a primary focus of therapists to examine the well-being and growth potential of the first and second generations to the exclusion of the grandparent generation.

Part of this problem centres around the issues of dependence, independence and interdependence. Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1973) and Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) feel that the issue of interdependence, often incorrectly termed dependence, emerges as a particularly important theme in the multi-adult family. In contrast with the myth of the American nuclear family as isolated from extended kinship ties, not only is there continuing interaction among parents and their adult offspring, but also there is interdependence across the generations (both at the level of social relations and at the level of psychological representations of relationships with the family). Most reports on adult lives are based on the assumption that it is particularly good in the culture to be independent, autonomous and differentiated from others. Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) claim this is a value judgement; actually, adults get along in an interdependent way.

Interdependence refers to the high rates of interaction across generations and accompanying exchanges of resources and services that take place across the generations in American society. This interdependence contributes to the maintenance of the multigenerational family. There is a paradox in that adults will strive to become psychologically and economically autonomous and self-reliant, but findings from systematic investigations of family life show that dependence across the generations is the typical mode of intergenerational relations.

Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1973) state that family therapy has had great difficulty dealing with this fact of the continuing closeness observed within the multigenerational family. All too often both investigator and therapist still believe that the goal both of development across the life cycle and the therapeutic process should be in the direction of increased "independence" and autonomy of the nuclear family unit. Such emphasis on autonomy fails to consider the "invisible loyalties" that bind families together. Indeed, Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1973) observe that helping family members to accept their dependency wishes and encouraging them to acknowledge and strengthen patterns of interdependence within the family is perhaps the central issue in family therapy. Instead, the expression of the wish to remain dependent on another causes much discomfort in American families.

As a result of this failure to explicitly recognize the continuation of such interdependence across the life cycle, adults may come to believe that it is inappropriate to maintain such close family ties. Throughout the life cycle people continue to be dependent on or attendant to parents and offspring. Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) believe that family therapy should attend more to the development of such loyalty among adults, should value relatedness more and individuality less, leading to a greater understanding of things that hold people together rather than those things that separate family members.

Summary of Related Research and Literature

In summary, most families comprise three generations: grandparents, parents and children. Studies indicate that there are high rates of contact and provision of aid and services across these generations. Although few multigenerational families reside in one household, at various times throughout the family life cycle, families may co-reside and problems can accrue when two or more adult generations share a single dwelling. Families must deal with the issues of boundary reorganization and hierarchy. Rules must be worked out about who is primary in status and who is secondary. This is especially pertinent around the sharing of child care. The issue of "who is in charge of the children" becomes central. The structuralist approach points to the need for a clearly defined hierarchy with no problematic crossing of generational lines. Parents must be higher in the hierarchy than the children and must be the ones clearly in charge. When a grandparent shares the household, the grandparent must be supportive of the parenting function and although sharing in the parenting role, must not assert dominance.

Problems can be intensified depending, also, on the position of the family in the family life cycle. Parents in the expansive phase, dealing with the dependency requirements of small children may turn to the grandparent generation for support and nurturance. The post-parental phase of the life cycle offers the grandparent opportunities to develop individual interests and activities. By becoming re-involved in parenting added stress and conflict may be created. Some family theorists and therapists note the importance

of validating the needs of all generational members and emphasize interdependence in family relationships. Across the generations and throughout the family life cycle, they stress the need for this interdependence to be acknowledged and supported, even strengthened.

Interaction and communication are always present within a family. Relationships can be defined as symmetrical or complementary, depending on the type of interaction patterns present. In a multigenerational household where the role of parenting is shared by two or more adults, these communication patterns provide information on the organization of such family units.

The present research addressed the general question of how multigenerational families organize themselves around the child care function, the hierarchical structure and the maintenance of the executive functioning of the parental unit. Specifically, the questions are:

Research Questions

1. In the multigenerational family what roles are evident in the adult family members in terms of symmetry and complementarity?
2. How is the hierarchical structure organized and are boundaries appropriately established and maintained?
3. On the basis of the family's interaction and communication patterns, what rules can be inferred about the multigenerational family's interactional system?

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

General Procedure and Design

The aim of this study was to examine the organization of a multigenerational family around the child care function, in terms of the family's interaction patterns, relationships, subsystems and boundaries to determine adult roles. Audiotaped samples of interactional data were obtained from three volunteer families by means of a semi-structured interview and an assigned task. The writer's observations and impressions of the interview session were recorded immediately upon completion of the family meeting. All data were analyzed with reference to the three research questions.

A descriptive case study approach was utilized in this research study. There were several factors which led to the choice of a case study approach. One was the need for added research on the subject of multigenerational families viewed from a systems perspective. This exploratory research provided information on the family system, its unique patterns of interaction, boundaries and subsystems. By looking at the whole system of the multigenerational family, interrelated variables were more likely to emerge and greater understanding achieved than if certain elements were isolated and examined individually (Brandt, 1981). The goal was not to test hypotheses, but to explore for a pattern or system in what was being studied, to examine the interactions in the

whole system. The detailed information provided can later be used to formulate and test hypotheses engendered by the study.

A second factor was the requirement of an indepth understanding of the family dynamics, necessitating an intensive consideration of each case. This understanding can best be achieved by a case study where "... the investigation may solicit information from the subject and may observe the subject and the surrounding situation while the subject is responding. This enables the interviewer to better interpret the data that are collected and to ask additional questions when necessary ....(and) he can explore new areas of interest" (Craig & Metze, 1979, p. 150).

A third factor suggesting the use of a case study was the small number of families which met the criteria of this study.

Brandt (1981) states that case studies have an advantage over other research methodologies by being heuristic, realistic, relevant to important social concerns and able to focus on significant problems. Thus, for this research, a descriptive study allowed the collection of detailed factual information, the identification of problems, and allowed comparisons to determine what other families were doing with similar problems or situations.

Subjects

Subjects were located through contacts made with local churches in the Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park areas. The writer called the clergy, explained the intended research and sent an information sheet (Appendix C) describing the project. One minister responded to the request for subject families.

Families who were living multigenerationally were contacted by the minister to see if they would be willing to consider participating in the study. Seven families were initially contacted and three were chosen to participate in the study because they met the following criteria: three generations residing in one household, all members to be third-generation Canadian, total family income to be above $50,000, children to be younger than age eight, and the grandparent(s) to be involved in some aspects of child care. The total family income of $50,000 or above was chosen because multigenerational families have been studied more extensively from the lower socioeconomic strata than have white, middle-class, mainstream families (Macklin & Rubin, 1983). For this study children were to be younger than age eight. During the expansive phase, it is the demands and needs of young children that the family has to meet and which can create certain stresses for the family (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981). Also, the involvement of the grandparent(s) was determined by their actual inclusion in daily routines (mealtimes, social activities) where they would have contact and some influence with their grandchildren. These criteria limit the generality of the findings, but it was necessary to control certain socioeconomic and demographic variables which the researcher was not attempting to study. Also, by limiting the study to a small number of subject families it was possible to obtain a more complete picture of each family and to evaluate the data in greater depth, while at the same time allowing for comparisons among the families involved.

The first family (Family A.) consisted of a couple with two sons, residing in their own home, and including the wife's mother who has lived with this family for the past four years. The second family (Family B.) consisted of a couple with three small children who had moved in with the husband's widowed mother on a temporary basis, until their new home was built. This was the third time in ten years that this family had lived together in this manner. The third family (Family C.) consisted of a single mother with a five year old son, both of whom continued to live in the residence of her parents. Thus, there were four members of this household who have lived multigenerationally for the past five years.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted on one family in order to provide information regarding the interview schedule, clarity and value of questions, and organization of the schedule. Since the interviewer is an important instrument and may affect the obtained data, practice with a non-subject family was necessary.

The family chosen for the pilot study met all of the research criteria; however, they were not third generation Canadians, but British immigrants who had been in Canada for seven years. As a result of the pilot study, adjustments were made in the content of the interview format and changes in the interviewer's style were effected. The questions addressed to the children were omitted as were some detailed questions around the household routine. The interviewer endeavoured to be less rigid with the

questions and answers and to allow for more flexibility and time for responses.

Interview Protocol

A semi-structured interview (Appendix A) was designed by the researcher to obtain information on (a) family data and background, (b) background to becoming a multigenerational household, (c) the sharing of childrearing in a multigenerational household, (d) general questions regarding child care roles, (e) general questions regarding the family and (f) concluding remarks. The interview designs were based on the literature review of Chapter II and adaptations made on the basis of the pilot study. Questions were open-ended to elicit as much information as possible. During the interview, subjects expressed feelings or volunteered information. These spontaneous expressions were important in allowing the subjects to air their points of view without the bias which could be created by the wording of the investigator's questions (Craig & Metze, 1979). This style of interviewing also allowed for flexibility in the introduction of topics which may not have been on the original list. Subjects were encouraged to give specific examples to assist the researcher's understanding.

It was attempted to conduct the interview via methods proposed by Selvini-Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cecchin and Prata (1980). Wherever possible, family members were asked to speak about their perceptions of the relationship between two other members. This method of interviewing sought to circumvent individual resistance to describing involvement in close relationships by using a triadic

mode. Through the interviewing principles of hypothesizing (the formulation of a hypothesis based on information about the family), circularity (the ability to interview on the basis of feedback from the family in response to questions asked) and neutrality (the ability of the interviewer to remain neutral to the whole family by not siding with one member or view and to limit the risk of biasing the material) it was endeavoured to elicit information. In this study only the principles of circularity and neutrality were appropriate.

A task (Appendix B) was assigned to the adult generations. "Discuss a concern or issue you may be facing in regards to the care of the children." The interviewer moved out of the range of the family, sitting at the opposite end of the room and observed the interactions. The task was tape recorded. The adult members determined the issue to be discussed and talked about it for no longer than ten minutes. Since they were asked to discuss a concern around the issue of child care, this provided an opportunity to view the involvement of the parents and grandparents in terms of over- or under-involvement, deference, side-taking, topic continuity, agreement and disagreement, who-speaks-to-whom and who-interrupts-whom. Also, this was a less controlled situation with the withdrawal of the interviewer, allowing for more spontaneity and naturalness.

Data Collection Procedures

The families involved in the study were initially contacted by telephone. Participation was defined as voluntary and it was

emphasized that the interviewer sought to learn how the family organized itself around the child care function in a household where there were two adult subsystems separated by a generation. At the interview session a consent form (Appendix D) was signed and permission to audiotape the session was obtained. Confidentiality was assured and every effort was made to establish rapport with all family members, through the use of preferred names, by first focusing upon less threatening information, and by respecting the right of the interviewees to withold information on questions which they preferred not to answer or discuss. Informants were encouraged to provide as much information as possible and even though one question might be asked of a specific person, the other members were invited to comment or to add information they wanted to share.

The interview also allowed for spontaneity and the natural course of development by being held in the homes of the subject families and by having the children present, not to be interviewed, but to be free to come and go and interact as normally as they could considering the circumstances. Therefore, the youngsters were permitted to interrupt the interview, ask for food, toys, clothes, play within or without the room and generally carry on as per normal considering a guest was in their home. This was valuable in allowing the interviewer to note interactions between the children and their parents and grandparents. It also reduced any tension the adults felt to keep things more formalized.

Data Analysis

Audiotaped recordings of the interview and of the task were transcribed and analyzed. In addition, the observations and impressions of the interviewer were also analyzed. Becker (1958), noting the importance of participant observation, stated the "analysis is carried on sequentially, important parts of the analysis being made while the researcher is still getting his data" (p. 653). The patterned ways in which family members interacted with each other and with the interviewer, during the actual interview, were explored. Patterns of symmetry and complementarity received particular attention. Clarity of the boundaries within the family were also assessed as indicated by communication patterns, member's participation (Aston & Dobson, 1972) and member's involvement with one another. Minuchin (1974) states that a family is a system that operates through transactional patterns and these repeated transactions establish patterns of how, when, and to whom to relate, and it is these patterns which underpin the system. Based on the data, rules existing in each of the families were inferred through the interviewer's observations of set patterns of responses and behaviour.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Interviews were completed during the months of April and May, 1985 and each averaged approximately 1½ hours in duration. All three families were interviewed in their respective homes.

The interview findings are explored through a case study format. A description of basic family background and information, responses to questions, the impressions of the interviewer, and a documented review of family interaction patterns are included in the case presentations. The case studies conclude with a statement of the inferred rules which determine the functioning of that particular multigenerational family system. The abbreviated headings of Mr. A., Mrs. A., and Mrs. AG. will denote the father, mother and grandmother in the A. Family. Children will be denoted by the pseudonyms Aaron and Andy. The same format will be followed for the B. Family with the pseudonyms of Barb, Bonnie and Brent for the three children. In the C. Family, Ms. C., Mr. C. and Mrs. C. represent respectively the single-parent mother, grandfather and grandmother, with the young grandson denoted by the name Craig. The abbreviation I. denotes the interviewer.

The A. Family

The interviewer was greeted by Mr. A. (33) and his two young sons, Aaron (6) and Andy (4), who enthusiastically fussed over the tape-recording equipment and ushered the interviewer into the kitchen area. There, the family was joined by Mrs. AG (64), and her daughter, Mrs. A. (32). Mr. A., the grandmother and the interviewer positioned themselves at the kitchen table, while Mrs. A. sat distanced, on a stool, nearer the kitchen counter. This position left her freer to involve herself with the two boys, who moved in and out of the kitchen area making requests for toys, clothing, snacks and permission to play outside. All of these requests were made of Mrs. A., clearly the one in charge of the children and their activities.

The mood was friendly but reserved and warmed up considerably over the 1½ hours. It also was announced near the end of the interview that Mr. and Mrs. A. were currently in a "war" which ultimately affected the overall tone of the session.

Mr. A. is a technician who completed high school and apprenticeship programs; Mrs. A., with two years of college, currently works as a secretary. Both parents work full-time and have been married for twelve years. Mrs. AG., has grade ten education, has been widowed for seven years and has resided with her daughter for the past four years. This arrangement fell into place when the grandmother, on arriving for a visit found she barely recognized her daughter -- "this ghostly person coming toward me." Overwhelmed by the care and needs of a toddler and infant, plus full-time work,

Mrs. A. described herself as a "wreck" at this time. Therefore, the grandmother, seeing a need and the family open to receiving, stayed to help and never went home. Currently it is considered a temporary-permanent situation. "It's up to mom," says Mrs. A. Because the grandmother owns her own home out-of-province near an eldest daughter and because the youngest grandson will be in school within two years, Mrs. AG. will consider her options in the future. This is not the first time the A. Family has lived multigenerationally, having resided with both sets of parents for a few months as newlyweds, when their first home was being built.

The researcher had spoken with Mrs. A. on the phone regarding the study and she had gathered the other adult members' support. They agreed they were all curious about the study and its format and were quite happy to assist.

The physical arrangement of the house consists of a three-bedroom bungalow with all adults having bedrooms on the main floor and the two boys sharing one room. A family room and play area complete the basement and everyone has freedom of movement throughout the house with the exception of the two adult bedrooms.

The A. Family described themselves as a normal, typical family and added "pretty private as far as outside interests with other people; we very seldom have visitors or go out visiting; we have friends but it's not like we have people every weekend." "Just everyday. Hum drum." "Ordinary."

Their expressed satisfactions with this type of lifestyle included:

> Mrs. A. I can work full-time without worrying and it's cheaper and less of a strain. Before, I had the kids at a babysitters and it was hard. I don't know how other women do it. I'm not as strong.

Mr. A. acknowledged babysitting as the main benefit, with his mother-in-law teasing him that having two women in the home to do the domestic chores freed him to not have to do anything. He admitted that it did take the pressure off his wife and she was much more relaxed. It was apparent throughout the interview that roles are traditionally defined in this household. For Mrs. AG. the satisfactions included not having to deal with practical things like utility bills and other payments; she felt useful in being able to provide a service for her daughter and she found it was a way to keep her days full.

As for disadvantages, the young couple experienced the lack of privacy as the main drawback to this arrangement.

> Mrs. A. Just sharing my home with another woman is hard.... It's like you live with your mom, then you think you are free. It's not that I don't want to live with her. I want to. I need to. It's just you give up a little bit of independence to get a lot. And I like my own space. I like to be on my own quite a bit if I can. And I like to run things my own way. You have to give and take.

Privacy or its lack were not significant issues for Mrs. AG. Since she babysits the boys from 7:30 - 4:30 and because they are enrolled in kindergarten and play school, she finds ample time to follow her own interests. Also, her "job," as she refers to it, is finished at 4:30 and freed of any parenting duties, she is very much on her own. "If we do need privacy," Mrs. AG. states, "one goes downstairs and I go in my bedroom and she goes in hers. That's it. That's how we deal with it." Then laughingly adds, "We can keep each other out,

but not the boys."

Throughout the interview, members laughed often and were very talkative, often interrupting each other. There were numerous interruptions from the boys, two lively, energetic youngsters, who, nevertheless listened carefully to and followed through on parental instructions. Their contact was almost exclusively with their mother, who would answer the door, get their coats, toys and reprimand them. Only twice was there any verbal exchange with their father and there was none with grandmother, although there were the rare occasions when the latter would point out to her daughter, if she failed to notice, when the children wanted something.

Roles in the A. Family Household

Roles are very clearly defined in this household. Because of their lengthy history together, as well as the demands of the outside work of the parents, the household organization runs very smoothly. As they related their daily and weekend routines, it was clear that the individuals involved knew their jobs and functions well, with little overlap and flexibility.

Grandmother is responsible for all of the child care from 7:30 - 4:30. When mother comes home in the late afternoon, Mrs. AG.'s job is completed and her parenting responsibilities over. She may intervene with the boys if she feels they are "bugging" mother or if she, herself, is going on an outing may take one or both of the boys for some fun. She also supervises while mother makes a transition from job to home with a bath or a cup of tea. But when mother resumes her parenting duties, Mrs. AG. is on her own. Because grandmother is with the boys during the day she plays a "substitute

parent" role by attending their play school or kindergarten activities and helping out as a parent volunteer. She enjoys her time with her grandchildren and takes pleasure in their accomplishments. She feels fortunate to also have ample private time to indulge her own interests in nature and crosswords. To her, her childcaring role, is like a "job."

All the adults agreed that Mrs. A. is the primary caregiver from 4:30 on. Her husband may be involved with work, courses or remodelling in the basement and is, therefore, absent for much of this time. Mrs. A. tries to devote as much time to her sons as possible, taking them on such outings as skating, tobogganing and swimming. After supper she spends considerable time with them assisting their reading, teaching them French, or playing board games. She takes it as her responsibility to ready them for bed with a bath and a story. Throughout this time period she is also in charge of the discipline and does the bulk of the reprimanding.

Mr. A. laughed and with a shrug admitted that during the week he doesn't get too involved with the boys except for play wrestling. "I don't get too involved with the kids. What does a guy do when you bring up two boys -- fight a little bit and play. That kind of stuff." Weekends are more his time to spend with the children and Mrs. A. declares, "I have a tendency to let him play with them if I can," as though there was some difficulty in her letting go. On weekends the boys are involved in Mr. A.'s chores, dragging tools around and hammering nails and other such masculine activities. Discipline, because he is more in contact with them, is primarily

his responsibility.

Everyone expressed satisfaction over these arrangements. They all have contact with the children and there is also time set aside for their own interests and past-times. They stated that they never sat down to clarify these roles or responsibilities -- "they just happened."

Household duties are also clearly divided. The kitchen is Mrs. A.'s domain and she is firm about it. "I don't let anyone else cook." Although Mrs. AG. may assist with advance preparations she leaves the kitchen upon Mrs. A.'s entering. "She's a bear if she finds me in there!" Household cleaning and laundry is shared between the two women. Mr.A. only assists with housework in an incidental way, if Mrs. A. is tired or if she gives him "the look." His responsibilities lie in doing the outside chores and automobile repairs.

Because of the age of the boys, their responsibilities are limited. They take the garbage out and must pick up their toys. All three adults would be involved in seeing that they follow through with the cleaning, although mother would be the most involved.

Executive Functioning, Hierarchy and the Clarity of Boundaries

The adults are in charge in this household. Even though the young sons had an abundance of energy and were rambunctious, they did not act out or misbehave. From the beginning when the interviewer asked Mr. A. how he would like the children to address their guest, he replied as Mrs. _____, and later stated that it

was important in this family that children respect their elders and realize that at this age they are not adult's equals.

The parents hold the power to make decisions and take the responsibility for the care of their children. There is a very clear demarcation between the responsibilities of grandmother with the boys. During the day she is a substitute parent, but after 4:30 her involvement with them is strictly for pleasure. Any disciplining is handled by mother or father.

> Mrs. AG. I discipline really only during the day, when I'm at home. After that, I stay out!

Still, she supports the rules the parents have decided for their children and never counteracts them.

> Mr. A. I think there's limitations as well. If one of the family, it doen't matter which one, makes up a rule or tells the kids not to do something or to do something, the other one never counteracts that. We may want to discuss it later on but never counteract that at the time.

Also, because her daughter is raising her sons similarly to the way Mrs. AG. raised Mrs. A. there are few disagreements. She mentions only that her daughter is sometimes more lenient and patient than she, herself, would be. Mr. A. agrees that his upbringing was similar to his wife's, so that leaves little room for disagreement between himself and his mother-in-law. And although the parents are united in their beliefs on childrearing, there exists a basic tenet that child care is basically woman's work. Even though father may discipline on the weekends, ultimately mother has the last word.

> Mrs. A. I usually have the last word, I think. If I see something going on, I pipe up. That's when

> it stops. Like it doesn't go any further. If their dad says, 'I don't think you should be doing that', and I say, 'No, he shouldn't be!', that's it!

Mr. A. agrees that the final discipline is up to Mrs. A. and Mrs. AG. adds, "Well, she's the Mom!"

Regarding such specific issues as table manners, all adult members would comment if behaviour was unacceptable although Mrs. AG. would comment only if the parents had not noticed first. During this section of the interview both parents shared equally in discussing the expected mode of behaviour and the measures taken to encourage good table manners. The only time grandmother commented was when she was specifically asked by the interviewer. If children do act out or misbehave, such measures as talking to them, sending them to their room, with-holding dessert, may be employed. Sending one child to his room has been used only twice. The behaviour of the boys is "pretty good." If they refuse to get ready for bed or dawdle in doing so there is no bedtime story. The parents are consistent in their discipline and always follow through. Although they view themselves as "strict" they do not feel they are overly so and that their sons do the normal amount of testing.

Mr. A. or Mrs. A. might request advice from grandmother only in the area of health, such as concern for certain childhood diseases. Mrs. AG., for her part, does not offer unsolicited consultation, stating that she learned a long time ago to stay out of spousal discussions.

Respect for the sibling subsystem was apparent. The boys are allowed to fight and the parents do not intervene. Even when their friends are downstairs and they get into conflict, all of the

adults encourage them to find their own resolutions. Only if it comes to a screaming match might grandmother intervene and say, "You sound like a bunch of girls" and that immediately quiets them.

In summation, the executive function is maintained by the parental subsystem, though largely carried out by mother. Grandmother supports the parents in all of their endeavours and there are no dysfunctional crossing of generational lines. Although the parents feel they are strict, boundaries are permeable. The children came close to mother for affection (touch, sitting on her knee) and though exchanges with father during this session were limited, they obtain contact with him through play fighting and helping him with chores.

Task

Grandmother suggested the topic of discussing the boys activities for spring and summer. The majority of the communication went back and forth between Mrs. A. and Mr. A. The total number of speech acts made by the three adults numbered 114. Of these, Mrs. AG. made 17.6% of the comments, Mr. A. made 40.3% and Mrs. A., 42.1%. It was important that the grandmother made the fewest remarks as she would not be directly involved in enrolling, driving or participating in these after work activities. Her comments revolved around information she had picked up from the boys as to their wanting soccer, swimming or T-ball. Further information from this assignment is included in the following section.

Interactional and Relationship Patterns Among Adult Members in the A. Family - Symmetry and Complementarity

As a group, the A. Family goes camping together; otherwise, their activities are more individually oriented. Mrs. AG. is content doing crosswords within the home and following her interest in nature. Mrs. A. has taken a Language course outside of the home and Mr. A. is the most involved in his interests away from the family. Other activities centered around the children, and as a couple, Mr. and Mrs. A. go out little together. Although the three adults often share an evening together, they are all involved in very separate activities -- crosswords, reading and television. This minimizes the contact among them and personal boundaries seem less permeable. Although eager to communicate during the interview, they were protective in minimizing and not mentioning those aspects of family life which may have proved upsetting. Towards the end of the interview when responding that it is the children who argue the most, Mrs. A. announces, "We're (Mr. and Mrs. A.) in a war at the moment, but we won't talk about that now." This may have explained the edge and tightness in her voice, her removing herself from the circle around the table and sitting in a more isolated position, and a lack of eye contact between husband and wife.

Mrs. AG. described the relationship between her daughter and son-in-law as typical. "They have their ups and downs. You would wonder if everything were honey and roses." Complementarity is reflected in their interactions. In terms of their roles with the children, Mrs. A. assumes the one-up position. She does the most

reprimanding, has the final authority and the last word. If the children do not listen to her husband, they listen to her. In the following example Mrs. A. takes the one-up position.

Mrs. A. Let's see, when did he start having problems with the French?
Mr. A. It was after we moved from the acreage.
Mrs. A. No. No. It was before that.
Mr. A. Well, I --
Mrs. A. (interrupting) You weren't that involved at the time. I know it was before.
Mr. A. Well, maybe....
Mrs. A. It was before.

In discussing information regarding her sons' activities and interests, Mrs. A. disagrees with her husband.

Mr. A. The teacher had them singing a lot and he really --
Mrs. A. (interrupting) Not that teacher. She did not have as much music in the program as the other one.
Mr. A. But he liked the music.
Mrs. A. Not as much as in the other class.

Disconfirmation is employed in the following example, when Mrs. A. negates Mr. A.'s observation.

Mr. A. Aaron's in a French immersion class.
Mrs. A. _____ (Mr. A.) speaks French. I'm going to classes. He is coming too.
Mr. A. You do well.
Mrs. A. I'm useless.

Despite appearances of Mrs. A. as the dominant one -- she tended to interrupt Mr. A., talked while he was talking, spoke in a louder more intense voice, and sometimes answered for her husband -- this cannot be taken as an indication of their relative strengths or weaknesses. In subtle ways Mr. A. was able to regain the one-up position. On one level he appears to give in to an argument with Mrs. A., but on another level, he disconfirms both her suggestion and her fears.

Mrs. A. I worry about the wrestling.
Mr. A. No. There's no problem there.
Mrs. A. Well -- sometimes it seems to get carried away, especially when Uncle Frank comes over.
Mr. A. Yes, but he has two daughters; he loves to wrestle.
Mrs. A. Still, it is too much. I'm afraid someone's going to break an arm or something.
Mr. A. Maybe I should think about curtailing it. You could be right. When they're 15 or 16, it might be too much.

Mr. A. presents more rational comments as a way of disconfirming Mrs. A.'s emotional responses and dissipating anger.

Mr. A. She's teaching them to read. There's one special way she wants them to learn to read.
Mrs. A. I'm teaching them to read.
Mr. A. There's one special way and she works with them.
Mrs. A. That's when I get a bit itchy. No one else seems to try to teach them.
Mrs. AG. Well, I don't try!
Mr. A. There's a certain method she's trying with them so if we get away from that --

In describing their marital relationship, Mrs. A. states that she and her husband are long past little things like socks and toilet tissue rolls. Although she hints at the "war" currently between them, no other information is revealed. Mr. A. remains silent. She feels their relationship has grown, but does not elaborate. As a couple they do little together; Mrs. A. admits her hesitation in seeking social outings.

Although they argue, Mrs. A. insists that arguments do not begin in the home, but come from without, from tension or stress at work. Mr. A. counters that he does not bring tension home from work. There is no follow up on this statement. Mr. A. feels that arguments are resolved by being left alone and the spouses withdraw with their feelings to mull things over.

A further example of complementarity occurs when Mrs. A.

determines that the relationship between her mother and husband is "strained," although they all agree that it is this relationship that experiences the least arguments. Humour is employed between mother-in-law and son-in-law and it is noteworthy that Mr. A. always refers to Mrs. AG. as "Mom". However, both grandmother and father disconfirm Mrs. A.'s definition of their relationship.

Mrs. A. Actually, they do more talking about technical projects then to me, cause Mom understands a lot more than I do.
Mr. A. I can finish her crosswords when she gets stuck, though. (laughter) Eh, Mom?
Mrs. A. I think it's had its downs and it's had its ups.
Mr. A. We get along pretty good.
Mrs. AG. It was my husband he was scared of. (laughter)

There was one further example of complementarity between son-in-law and mother-in-law.

Mrs. AG. The kids take the garbage out.
Mr. A. Not so much in the winter.
Mrs. AG. No, not in the winter. They do it sometimes, though.

Symmetrical interactions were in evidence between the two women. Mr. A. describes the relationship between the two women as "equal" and states that it is more than a mother-daughter relationship, that the two women are on the same level. Mrs. A. admits that it would be problematic for her to have Mrs. AG. dominant in her own home and feels they are equally powerful. There's is a parallel relationship with some examples of symmetry.

Mrs. A. Kids seem to get away with a lot more than I did. Like the verbal abuse to parents.
Mrs. AG. We hear the children over in the playground. They swear constantly.
Mrs. A. When I was growing up children knew their place.
Mrs. AG. It's a shame parents don't do more.

Confirmation was the style between the two women. In the following example, Mrs. AG. empathizes with her daughter.

Mrs. A. Sometimes, I'd like to just go where no one knows where I am going. To have a bit of treasure somewhere.
Mrs. AG. You need a break. You work pretty hard.
Mrs. A. Yes. A lovely rest somewhere.
Mrs. AG. Hmm. It would be nice for you.

In this family grandmother helps to stabilize the system. Since the spousal subsystem is traditionally oriented, much of the housework and child care is the domain of Mrs. A. Prior to her mother's arrival and with the demands of full-time work Mrs. A.'s resources were drained. Mrs. AG. took on some of the responsibilities that allowed Mr. A. to remain peripheral.

Family Rules

In observing the interaction among the members of the A. Family, the following rules can be inferred: (1) Grandmother supports the executive function of the parental subsystem; she does not dominate nor interfere. (2) Mother is "the mother" and is ultimately the one responsible for the children's care, well-being and discipline. In dealing with the children, it is assumed that mother will take the lead. (3) Father's main role is to play with his sons and have them help him in appropriately "masculine" chores. (4) Housework and the physical care of the children is largely the domain of mother and grandmother. Each person has clearly defined responsibilities primarily based on gender. (5) Anger is not dealt with directly; open conflict, disagreement and criticism are not allowed. (6) In the case of a behaviour problem with a child it is most often mother who will initiate the appropriate action and father will observe. (7) Mr. A. will be more rational

while Mrs. A. will be more emotional, father is more reasonable, mother more worrisome, serious, intense and active. (8) Grandmother does not take sides in the couple's conflicts. (9) Self-expression and achievement outside the family is allowed. (10) Humour is expressed between mother-in-law and son-in-law.

The B. Family

The B. Family interview took place in the grandmother's home around the kitchen table. The atmosphere was relaxed and friendly. It was attended by the grandmother, aged 57, her son, aged 35, and her daughter-in-law, aged 33. The three children, Barb, aged 7, Bonnie, aged 4, and a son, Brent, aged 20 months, moved in and out of the kitchen as need and interest necessitated. The two girls played outside but ventured in for various snacks, toys and added clothing. The young son, because of a recent illness, stayed mainly in the kitchen area, sitting most often with mother and to a lesser degree with father.

Mrs. BG. works full-time outside of the home as a clerk and has a Grade 12 education. She has been widowed for 33 years. A younger son, married and with children, lives in a distant city. Mr. B. has a four-year university degree and owns his own business; his wife has two years post-secondary education and until the arrival of her youngest child, worked part-time.

When first contacted by the interviewer, the grandmother expressed immediate interest; after checking with the adult children, all agreed to the interview.

The seating arrangement around the kitchen table consisted of mother at the head with the interviewer seated opposite. Grandmother sat opposite her son, and because she was seated next to the window, there was no easy access for her out of her seat or for the grandchildren, should they have wanted, easy access in to see her. This may have been conscious on her part to allow the children accessibility to their parents with the least disturbance. The children were introduced and then instructed by their mother that they could come and go as need and wishes indicated.

The B. Family have lived multigenerationally for one month and expect to live this way for another 6-8 weeks, a temporary arrangement until the young couple's new home is built. The family lived together previously, for a period of two months when Mr. B.'s office was under construction and grandmother lived with her son for 1½ months during a period of illness. Following the couple's marriage ten years ago, they resided with Mrs. B.'s family for one month. Currently, her relatives live out-of-province.

Mrs. BG. initiated the move in together. "I figured it would be easier and less expensive than their finding an apartment. I work full-time so I'm not at home for most of it. Besides, I've done it several times before, gathered up my duds and sort of pushed everything around in the house."

When asked how they felt about their decision to live together Mr. B. answered first, saying only, "I felt it was a good idea," and later in the interview mentioned the financial savings. His wife interrupted stating, "I didn't!", and explained the prob-

lem of winter driving and the concern of the long drive taking Barb back and forth to school. In the end the financial considerations won her over. None of the adults expressed any concerns over living together. "We've done it before." "Mom has her own life and she works." "We've lived together before and it was fine."

The house is a small two bedroom bungalow with a completed one bedroom basement suite. Because there is more room upstairs, grandmother felt it would be more convenient to keep the children close to their parents and for her to do the moving. Also, because of a health problem, she felt it would be less disturbing to others if she was in her own area. All adults agree that there is much movement between the upper and lower levels and the house is open to everyone. Mr. B. showers downstairs; the grandchildren play and spend "special" time with grandmother in the basement. Bedrooms are considered the only private domain.

For this family, the benefits of this type of living arrangement are many. The extra time with her grandchildren is appreciated by Mrs. BG.; companionship with her daughter-in-law is an added benefit. For the young couple, financial savings and the availability of assistance with child care are advantages. Disadvantages do not exist at this point; should they reside together for a longer period of time, conflicts, which are not now apparent, might surface. Even privacy is not considered a problem. All adults state they have ample private space and time within this type of household. With regard to the young couple, grandmother notes, "If I feel a discussion coming on, I go downstairs," and Mr. B. affirms, "Mom knows when a discussion is coming on that that is her cue to leave."

Throughout the interview, warmth and humour were evident. Generally, family members listened attentively to each other's comments and participated equally in the discussion. They described themselves as a close family with Mrs. B. emphasizing that her husband does more than his share in helping and they spend much of their time in activities with their children. Mrs. BG. is included in many of these events.

Roles in the B. Family Household

Roles in the family "just evolved." The B. Family stated that they never consciously sat down to discuss the possible problems, conflicts, or roles. "If something needs to be done, someone does it." As events happened they were able to discuss them without worrying in advance. Clarity as well as flexibility exist around the roles played by the adult members. The daily routine followed a clear schedule because of the adults' outside work and the children's schooling. Throughout the day, child care is primarily mother's responsibility, but grandmother is involved in incidental ways. Since she is the first to rise in the morning, she is frequently joined by the three little ones for breakfast. This has developed into a special time for the first and third generations to talk, share and plan their respective days. It also assists the parents as one less activity in getting the children ready. When Mrs. BG. leaves for work, the parents have had time to ready themselves for the day and are now able to focus on the children's needs.

The weekdays follow a fairly set routine. Because Mrs. B. drives her eldest daughter to school in a distant town, and because

Bonnie has play school twice weekly, Mrs. B. is rarely home. When she is available it is to do errands, shopping, and the odd chore, but "mostly not a lot around the house gets done." Work is shared evenly by the three adults. Everyone involves themselves in some aspect of meal preparation or cleanup. The children help out in small ways, by always making their beds, helping to tidy their room and picking up toys. The parents alone supervise the children's completion of chores. Grandmother may involve them with some small task such as helping her to water plants or assist in spring gardening.

Executive Functioning, Hierarchy and the Clarity of Boundaries

The B. Family were asked to discuss pertinent aspects of child-rearing -- issues around discipline, responsibilities, and regular routines such as bed-time and meal-times. The discussion showed that the parents support each other in guidelines and decision-making and that they are the ones firmly in charge. Grandmother is a supportive part of the hierarchy, but is only in charge when both of the parents are absent. As the parents discussed the issues, grandmother made only the occasional comment, speaking only when invited or in a way that was supportive of the parenting function. Her role in this household is to enjoy her grandchildren and she feels fortunate to have them so close. Her son noted that it is her special fortune to be able to spoil them and she described her time with them as "rich."

> Mrs. BG. They see me just about every weekend anyway. But now that they're here it gives me a chance to do a lot of sewing -- and -- oh -- I teach them little hobbies, crafts. You know -- simple knitting, stitchery. They come down in the basement and

> help me out and I teach them.... I enjoy my grandchildren. Of course, I go to their concerts and things like that and often I try to take just one out. Maybe shopping or for a treat.

The young adults expressed appreciation of her acceptance of the young children.

> Mrs. B. She doesn't mind the mess.
> Mrs. BG. Oh, no! That's what kids do!
> Mr. B. And she childproofed the home as much as possible.
> Mrs. BG. Oh, yeah! The gate here at the stairs. Brent figured out how to unlock it the second day he was here. (All laugh) And I moved most of my stuff -- valuables -- out of the way.

The lines of communication were clear around the children's asking permission to visit friends, playing outside or having friends over. The researcher noted that during the course of the interview the children felt quite comfortable in expressing their wants in a free yet mannerly style. Of the observed interactions a pattern emerged. When the two daughters came into the kitchen, requests were made by the eldest child to mother first, on the issues of clothing, toys and food. Because of the mother's involvement with the youngest child who was sometimes crying and uncomfortable, she would refer the daughter to father or he would automatically intervene. He was the one who would fix the nine crackers or obtain the necessary warmer coats. If mother was not involved with the baby, then she would take charge of the requests and father would play a supporting role.

This did not apply fully to the issue of all snacks or to playing downstairs. Here ownership and territory became important. A first request was for yoghurt. When grandmother stated she was planning on serving it for the evening dessert, Mr. B. supported her statement and suggested crackers instead. When the children

requested permission to play downstairs, although it was asked of the parents, the parents did not reply, but turned instead to grandmother to seek her response. Later, the adult children agreed that by living in the grandmother's house, they felt ultimately that she had the final say in what would affect her or her home and possessions.

Discipline in the B. family is handled mainly by mother. "Time out," if necessary, is employed and the parents laugh that, whereas, father will talk to the children and reason with them, mother uses "action." Grandmother is rarely involved in reprimanding the children but shares with the parents the expectations of the children's behaviour. Grandmother observed that the two parents were similar in their views and stated that she shared their child-rearing philosophy, and noted that as a parent, "I was probably harder, being a single parent; I don't think I'd be as hard today." Grandmother had never felt that the grandchildren had gone to her first in any attempt to manipulate the parents. "They know I will side with their mom and dad."

In summation, the parents share the executive function, although mother is more in charge since she is at home with the children. Grandmother supports the parental subsystem.

Task

The topic of discussion was suggested by Mrs. BG. The total number of speech acts made by the adults numbered 80. Mr. B. contributed 20% of the comments, Mrs. B., 35% and Mrs. BG., 45%. Since the grandmother had initiated the conversation dealing with the

couple's move into their new home, she raised several areas of concern and her comments were the lengthiest. Possibly because of their involvement with the children during this time, the majority of the responses by the adult children consisted of brief comments or one word responses.

Interactional and Relationship Patterns Among Adult Members in the B. Family - Symmetry and Complementarity

Symmetrical interaction patterns were most evident between all members of the B. Family. Interactions showing mutual confirmation and support were readily apparent. The family members were eager to communicate but stayed only with what was acceptable. Disagreements were minimized and there was only subtle evidence of competitiveness. There was much laughter and many issues were closed with examples of humour.

Interactions between the grandmother and daughter-in-law were primarily symmetrical. They confirmed and supported what the other was saying. In responding to a question concerning household chores, the following exchange took place.

Mrs. BG. Everyone pitches in.
Mrs. B. Whoever sees a job needing to be done, does it.
Mrs. BG. I like to keep things informal and relaxed.
Mrs. B. It's the best way.

Both women expressed emotion, warmth, and excitability. Mrs. BG. presented the most detail and often added-lively stories. They agreed that they argued the least. "Probably," explains the grandmother, "because we are not blood relatives." The daughter-in-law responded, "If we stayed here longer it might happen." Although no

actual details were given, a recent incident indicated the surfacing of some negative feelings. The two women kept the conversation vague and impersonal through the limited use of the pronoun "I" and curtailed any strong emotion coming through.

Mrs. BG. I know I had a little situation here awhile ago and - uh - I said to - uh. Well, we'll try this and I said if you find that something -- we can't manage much longer we'll go find our own ways before you get angered at each other and we - still it - because - still we're friends, you know.
Mrs. B. Yes. Talk.
Mrs. BG. Yeah. That's it. Yeah.
Mrs. B. Be able to talk when you need to.
Mrs. BG. Yeah and --
Mrs. B. And not interfere.
Mrs. BG. Uh huh. What do the girls want?

Mrs. B. frequently responded for her mother-in-law when Mrs. BG. was asked specific questions. There was one example of complementarity around child care, where Mrs. B. disconfirms the grandmother.

Mrs. BG. I like to take the baby when he's fussy --
Mrs. B. (interrupting) Oh, no! He's fine.
Mrs. BG. Not just now. But at other times. When you're busy.
Mrs. B. Well, you have things to do too.
Mrs. BG. Well, I --
Mrs. B. When Brent's fussy, he's fussy. He just wants his mom.
Mrs. BG. Yes, but --
Mrs. B. Oh, you help lots.

The least interaction appeared between mother and son. Though they expressed warmth and often laughed with each other, there were few examples of direct communication. One example of conversation implies criticism from grandmother. Mr. B.'s usually clear language becomes halting. He does not maintain the complementary transaction of being one-down and shifts to symmetrical. Also, as tension increased, his wife moved in to side with him.

Mrs. BG. I wouldn't say I was harder on you then you are on yours but then the situation's different because I

was such - an only - a single mother and I think I felt I had to be harder on them and uh -- and then with it - uh - time will tell when he's raising his boy because boys and girls are definitely different to raise. Uh - in some - in a lot of respects, you know.

(overlapping with son) I think that's the reason I was harder.

Mr. B. What? Discipline-wise?
I don't -- I don't. Well, I don't remember. I'd maybe gotten whacked a few times that I deserved it, but I don't think that that was hard -- um.
(pause)
But I assume that I'm going to do the same thing when the days come that they do it as well.
Do you think you were harder?

Mrs. BG. Uh.

Mr. B. We fought a lot. That, that was like when you have two brothers --

Mrs. B. (sides with her husband) That was when you were older though.

Mr. B. Like - uh - we haven't reached that stage.

Mrs. B. We haven't reached that stage.

Mrs. B. then changes the topic to a discussion of her own family of origin.

The husband and wife were concerned with parenting tasks throughout the interview. They were highly supportive of each other, maintaining eye contact and often physically touching. Mrs. B. would pat her husband's shoulders and often smiled at him. Although most activities were centred around the family, this couple ensures finding time for themselves as a unit.

Family Rules

On the basis of family interaction patterns the following rules can be inferred about the B. Family. (1) Ideas are freely expressed and listened to by other family members who also feel free to comment. However, if there is a hint of disagreement, conversation fades or the topic is changed. (2) Caring feelings are freely expressed to the children and particularly by Mrs. B. to Mr. B. (3) Mrs. BG.

and Mrs. B. express themselves emotionally, while Mr. B. expresses himself rationally. (4) Responsibilities are clearly defined. (5) The parents share executive authority, although mother is in charge most often because of her time with the children. (6) Grandmother supports the authority of the parents and only assumes executive functioning in their absence; she does not interfere. (7) In the case of a behaviour problem with a child, mother initiates the appropriate action and father supports her stance, unless he feels she is too emotional; then he will step in and deal with the situation in a more rational manner. (8) Mother is more intense, father more relaxed. (9) Work is important and valued, but family time and pleasure is of greatest importance. (10) Humour is valued. (11) Household duties are shared equally by all adult members.

The C. Family

The participants in the C. Family interview, Mr. CG. (grandfather), aged 49, Mrs. CG. (grandmother), aged 46, Ms. C. (mother), aged 25, and her young son, Craig, aged 5, welcomed the interviewer into the grandparent's home. Ms. C., a recent university graduate, realizing the difficulty graduate students often have in obtaining subjects, had agreed to the interview and encouraged her parent's participation. The interview took place in the family's living room with the four family member's nestled closely together on the one sofa -- mother, son, grandmother and grandfather. Although it was noted that the interview would be lengthy and that Craig was free to move in and out of the session, the young boy remained near his mother, except for three quick forays out to the kitchen or to his room for

added toys. His mother had provided him with numerous playthings and he kept himself occupied creating various structures on the coffee table or at his mother's feet. His movements were generally unobtrusive and whenever he spoke, he did so in a soft voice or whisper and which ever adult was attending him at the time, spoke quietly as well.

Overall, the members of the C. Family lead very active lives. All three adults work full-time and their days are structured with activities and interests. Both grandparents have completed high school with added training from the jobs they've held throughout the years. Ms. C., with a Bachelor's Degree, works in a neighbouring city, therefore, necessitating her son's placement in Day Care and with a private babysitter. An older brother currently resides away from the family home.

There was an atmosphere of warmth, much laughter and family closeness in this group. Members talked animatedly with each other, made frequent eye contact and because of their proximity on the couch, physical contact, as well. The family has been living three - generationally since Craig's birth. During her pregnancy and following her son's birth, as Ms. C. was continuing her schooling, her choice was to remain in the family home. This decision was supported totally by the grandparents -- indeed, welcomed. There has been no contact with Craig's father. Although they stated it was a temporary arrangement, no changes or possibilities make it likely that this family arrangement will differ in the near future.

The physical arrangement of the house consists of three bedrooms on the main floor, with a family room and play area in the

basement. Craig occupies his own bedroom and all areas of the home are considered common ground with the exception of the adults' bedrooms.

Although there was an initial pause regarding the family's description of themselves, this was followed by a stream of responses. They all agreed that they are a very close family and a very busy household. All are involved in a variety of activities which interest them as a group and as individuals. Although their schedules at times are hectic, everyone "pitches in to help with housework or Craig's care or whatever." As a family, and if time permits, they take outings as a unit and had just returned from a shared Mexican holiday. There was a lot of enjoyment expressed as they discussed this, eyes bright, voices high and much laughter evident.

Expressed satisfactions were many and focussed primarily on the presence of the grandson in the home. For the grandparents, being able to watch Craig "grow and improve" is a pleasure. For Ms. C. the primary advantage is having a family for her son, particularly a male role model. She states that because she is fairly ambitious and involved in numerous interests, the convenience of living at home with babysitters at hand, provides enormous freedom.

Privacy in this family is not considered a problem because Ms. C. has never lived away. The family agreed that this lack of interruption has created less conflict and an easier adjustment. Ms. C. defines the one disadvantage for her as not being a lack of privacy, but rather a lack of independence, saying that she would like to do a lot of different things and finds it hard to be dependent.

She balances it with travel, taking as much as a month to travel on her own outside of Canada each year. Although grandmother states that she doesn't feel there are disadvantages, her daughter interrupts to point out that they do miss out on some social situations because they are babysitting Craig. Still, Mrs. CG. insists that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages and Mr. CG. nods in agreement.

Roles in the C. Family Household

The heavy committment of C. Family members to their jobs and outside interests necessitates a smooth operation of household duties and chores, particularly pertaining to Craig's care. This has not posed a problem for this family.

Ms. C. We all can give. Which I think is important. If somebody can't do something then someone else will pick it up. It's not as if everyone has really defined roles. We all sort of compromise.

Mrs. CG. I don't believe in having everything rigid or too structured. It wouldn't work well. A household can't operate if it's all strictly defined. It's much easier if you see something that needs doing to do it.

Flexibility, willingness to bend and compromise and a desire for each other's well-being were stated as the basic criteria for the efficient operation of this household. No one felt there were any problems with the current situation and all felt there was minimal conflict.

In terms of childcare, Ms. C. takes charge of readying her son for Day Care in the morning, and both leave the home before either grandparent arises. Since Ms. C. is the last one home in the evening, grandfather picks Craig up at the child's centre. It is recognized and stated openly that the ultimate responsibility for Craig's care.

In terms of pleasurable activities, Ms. C. and her son are involved in bike riding, story telling, playing of games, skating, swimming, hockey and the taking of innumerable trips to the city to partake of opportunities there. Grandmother and grandfather often join in these events and grandfather also invites Craig to participate in playing catch or kicking a ball around in the backyard.

Household responsibilities are flexible and are handled in the following manner. Everyone contributes to the family meals; Mrs. CG. does much of the preparation on the weekends to ease mid-week hassles and Mr. CG. laughingly asserts that his involvement is primarily to put the food in the oven. Cleanup is shared by all adults -- Mr. CG. does the vacuuming, Mrs. CG. the laundry and Ms. C. the ironing. On weekends everyone spends Saturday morning cleaning. Craig, too, has specific chores -- dusting, sorting laundry and keeping his room tidy. Ms. C. insists that in being part of the family it is important for him to participate in all aspects appropriate to his age. She checks his job completions, but all adults offer support, encouragement and authority. Outside work and vehicular upkeep is maintained by Mr. CG. who expressed no difficulty in helping with the domestic indoor jobs, stating it is only right since everyone is involved in full-time employment.

Executive Functioning, Hierarchy and the Clarity of Boundaries

The grandparents in the C. Family support and respect the role of Ms. C. as parent and she, in turn, is open to their involvement and participation in parenting. She comments that this creates the situation of Craig having three parents in reality and that she feels

at ease with this. The three adults form a strong alliance with no outward resentment expressed or indicated by the grandparents in terms of being re-involved in childrearing. Their young age may also be a factor. For Ms. C. the benefits of shared parenting are numerous -- she has more time for herself, for studies and interests; she feels supported emotionally and has adequate adult contact to help with her own feelings of frustration around parenting. Her son has the added contact and care of two other adults. Still the ultimate responsibility for Craig's care is his mother's. She has the final decision. Ms. C. states that she welcomes her parent's input and opinions but because the childrearing philosophies of the three adults are similar, because Ms. C. is rearing her son in much the same manner as she, herself, was raised, it is rare that the grandparents comment about something with which they disagree.

Craig rarely needs disciplining, talking with him is sufficient. If he is really upset or misbehaving, he is sent to his room for a brief time-out. If disciplinary actions are necessitated, it happens "at the moment," not "when your mother gets home." Ms. C. adds that because he is so much a part of the family he is used to guidance, reprimands, suggestions and parenting from all of the adults. The grandparents and parent treat him with respect and are open to meeting his individual needs without catering to them or spoiling him. They feel he does not manipulate them. If mother has said "No" the older generation respects this. The adults are consistent with rules and expectations. Communication is open and if they are unsure of a rule or message they always check it out with the other adults. Craig is a well-mannered child, intelligent and creative. He plays

Junior Trivial Pursuit and creates a variety of fascinating structures from leftover cardboard forms and whatever, around the house. Although he "tests" he meets with a strong parental alliance and consistent rules and reprimands. The interviewer observed that throughout the interview he played quietly, appeared to be listening to much of the conversation and laughed often with the rest of his family members.

In terms of the specific tasks around childrearing, all family members are involved in teaching Craig table manners -- whoever notices something amiss comments, or if disciplinary action is necessitated, whoever sees it or is irritated by it, acts. They enjoy his company around the supper table and encourage him to share in the day's conversation of events.

It is the mother's responsibility to put her son to bed when she is present. There is no definite routine as they may have involved themselves in different activities, although a story is often common. Craig may drag bedtime out from 8:00 to 9:00 but Ms. C. finds that bribes and talking around the issue succeed in getting him into bed. Mrs. CG. comments that the grandparents have better luck in keeping him in bed as he tries to sneak out when his mother is around. The grandmother feels that she is the most firm about bedtime.

Throughout the interview, Ms. C. was the most involved with her son -- talking with him, urging him to play more quietly, suggesting new games and praising his accomplishments. Whenever she was involved directly with talking to the researcher, grandmother would take over. Grandfather was the least involved. He would

watch and deal with Craig when the two women were unavailable. If mother was occupied, and Craig was interrupting or restless, grandmother would intervene, rather than grandfather.

There is much acceptance in this family of the involvement of all three adults in childrearing, with final support for Ms. C. as the mother. They claim that Craig is at ease with all of them, feel he goes to them all fairly equally, and laughed that just a year ago he had questioned, "Who really is my mother?"

Task

Mr. CG. suggested the first topic and it was readily accepted with no other alternatives offered. The focus of discussion was on Ms. C.'s accepting a part-time job along with her full-time position and the problems which might accrue around Craig's care. The ten minutes consisted of Mrs. CG. asking her daughter a series of questions around pertinent issues such as babysitting, choice of babysitters, Craig's spring activities, actual details of the job, and Ms. C.'s expectations of their involvement. The total number of speech acts numbered 136. Of these, Mr. CG. contributed 13.2% of the comments, Ms. C. made 41.2% and Mrs. CG., 45.6%. Mr. CG.'s comments centered only on his actual participation regarding picking Craig up at Day Care and how this would fit into his shift work schedule. Otherwise, grandmother determined the flow of the conversation with her questions and her daughter responded with her own ideas and suggestions.

Interactional and Relationship Patterns Among Adult Members in the C. Family - Symmetry and Complementarity

Throughout the interview session it was the women who participated the most, commenting and providing detail and exchanging interactions with each other. Grandfather, reclining on the sofa, smiled as the conversation continued but added only sparse comments and on occasion a humourous remark. Towards the end of the interview he conversed more readily and with further detail. He seemed to listen attentively, nodding occasionally. A few times he would begin to speak, but his voice being soft was quickly interrupted by one of the women and he would cease talking and sit back on the sofa. It was Mr. CG., then, who adopted the one-down position in regards to both his wife and daughter. Often his wife would speak for him. An example of disconfirmation is in the following exchange where not only does she answer the questions directed to him, but speaks with the more impersonal "he" rather than "you".

Ms. C.	(to grandfather) Are you off Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday?
Mr. CG.	I'm working --
Mrs. CG.	(interrupting) He's working tomorrow night, Saturday night and Sunday night.
Mr. CG.	Yeah.
Ms. C.	So you're off Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday?
Mrs. CG.	So then he's working Thursday.
Ms. C.	(addressing Mr. CG.) But what are you working? Days?
Mrs. CG.	Days on Thursday.

There were only two examples of direct verbal interaction between the spouses during the interview time, both being a direct question and answer regarding a statement of fact. Both questions addressed by Mrs. CG. were responded to with warmth by Mr. CG. On the surface the relationship appears smooth, but with some rigidity. The system

is stabilized by minimizing differences and areas of disagreement. These simply are not talked about. Grandfather responds that there are few if any arguments and those that may arise on occasion are ignored and go away on their own. Mrs. CG. nods in agreement. Ms. C. reflects the cautiousness her parents express in talking about each other and their feelings by commenting vaguely on their relationship, saying only -- "Good. (pause) I don't know." Stability is maintained by neglecting to pursue differences openly or by changing the subject.

At times the relationship pattern expressed between grandfather and mother was also complementary. Ms. C. would interrupt her father's statements and talk about him to mother when father was present. Examples of such exchanges are:

Mrs. CG. (to daughter) How are you going to get home by 5:00?
Ms. C. Unless he (referring to father) can pick him up on the way home from work (speaking to mother, not father).

Mr. CG. is apparently not as involved in some of the aspects of running the household, as he holds back and does not become active in taking part in the dialogue which is going on.

Ms. C. interrupts her father and completes statements for him in such interactions as:

Mr. CG. Sometimes it might end up being closer to 9:00 --
Ms. C. (interrupting) -- before Craig goes to bed.

And on another occasion:

Mr. CG. Craig likes to play --
Ms. C. (interrupting) -- play ball games outside. In the park.

By disconfirming grandfather's right to comment on the activities of her son, Ms. C. asserts herself as one-up, and also establishes her-

self as higher in the hierarchy when parenting is defined.

Another indication of complementarity is the grandmother's description of Mr. CG.'s and Ms. C.'s relationship. She describes it as "typical father-daughter" where the daughter has her father kind of wrapped around her little finger. Mr. CG. is very proud of his daughter's accomplishments and spoke at great length, indeed his longest speech in the entire interview, when praising and describing her relationship with Craig and her attributes as a mother. He is strongly supportive of her endeavours and eager to help her to achieve her goals.

Patterns of communication were largely symmetrical between Mrs. CG. and Ms. C., particularly around discussing issues of child care. There was also evidence of increasing competitiveness. They often said the same thing at the same time, completed the other's sentences or would interrupt. The following exchange occurs following Craig saying "No" to an assigned chore and shows the symmetrical escalation.

Mrs. CG. If I ask him, 'Would you bring up some potatoes?' his attitude is --
Ms. C. and Mrs. CG. together: 'Why do I have to do all the work around here?'
Mrs. CG. But in the end --
Ms. C. In the end he always does it.
Mrs. CG. When you explain to him why he has to help --
Ms. C. -- Why he has to help, then he usually does.

Or in another exchange:

Mrs. CG. But on the whole he really doesn't get that much discipline because he's --
Ms. C. -- He's such a good kid.
Mrs. CG. Yes, he is very good actually.
Ms. C. A really good kid.

Although there is some symmetrical escalation, it does not

develop into quarrels. The young mother deflects the grandmother's final statements by laughing or changing the topic. On another occasion:

Mrs. CG. .... On the whole he does eat most -- there's the odd --
Ms. C. -- like vegetables. Though he has to eat a few of them.
Mrs. CG. There are certain things that he doesn't like --
Ms. C. -- like lasagna.
Mrs. CG. He doesn't like lasagna. But macaroni, he'll eat.
Ms. C. Macaroni, hot dogs.

When general family issues were discussed, Ms. C. responded on an equal basis to her parents and when talking about her own activities. Although there are signs of protectiveness, the parents support her rights to independence and achievement through respecting her right to travel, take courses and work part-time. They appeared pleased with her successes. She has been encouraged and allowed to pursue independent interests.

Ms. C. comments that she and her parents are equal in parenting Craig but asserts her position as mother in subtle ways, by having the final word in exchanges and in initiating the conversation on topics that deal with her son. Overall the family maintains a smooth-flowing operation. They know each other well. Grandmother comments that this lessens conflict as "we all know what each other is thinking." Generally differences are minimized. Any disagreements are discussed in a reasonable and rational manner with emotions kept in control.

Family Rules

On the basis of family interaction patterns, the following rules can be inferred about the C. Family. (1) Ms. C. defines

herself as dominant in the hierarchy in terms of parenting her son. She is in charge. (2) The grandparents support and assist in the maintenance of the executive function. (3) In the case of a behaviour problem with Craig, the female members of the family initiate the appropriate action. Mr. CG. would observe. (4) Family members express themselves rationally, moreso, than emotionally. (5) Disagreements are not expressed openly. (6) In family interactions, it is assumed that grandmother and mother will take the lead. (7) An accepted way of relating is through humour. (8) Family members support development and growth. (9) Work and family closeness are valued.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The present research explored the organizational and communication patterns of multigenerational families residing in a single dwelling. In this chapter the three research questions will be discussed and analysed, and the limitations and implications for counselling and future research will be presented.

Analysis and Discussion of the Research Questions

Research Question 1

What roles are evident in the adult family members in terms of symmetry and complementarity?

Interaction patterns within the three families were observed. On the basis of these observed patterns, conclusions about the family members' roles can be determined. In the A. Family more complementary interaction than symmetrical interaction was observed between the two spouses. With his quiet voice and relaxed manner, Mr. A. appeared to be the more submissive partner. Mrs. A. spoke loudly and more abruptly and she often interrupted her husband or spoke for him. However, Mr. A. exercised more power in defining the relationship, and was therefore, in the one-up position. Roles in this family were traditionally defined and the father was the least involved in child care. Based on the premise of complementarity, if one person is unable or unwilling to perform certain duties, the other person is required to take on that responsibility (Watzlawick & Weakland, 1979). Since Mr. A. was less involved, Mrs. A. assumed the major responsi-

bility for parenting tasks. As a parent she was in authority and dominant, but in her relationship with her husband she was one-down. Mr. A. kept one-up by being overly rational, by not getting angry, by using silence and believing that problems would go away on their own. Therefore, issues could not be discussed or resolved. Mrs. A. does not deal with her anger and minimized difficulties in the spousal unit by stating that problems stemmed from work and not the home environment. Mr. A. also appeared "strong" because of the behaviour Mrs. A. exhibited. She sat on the periphery of the group and at times looked sad and distant. She spoke of wanting to "run away" and stated that before the arrival of her mother she was a "wreck" and could not cope with all the responsibility and did not feel "strong" like other women. Developmentally, following the birth of their children, roles and rules did not change to accommodate to this changed circumstance in the A. household. In nurturing small children, Mrs. A. received little support and assistance from her husband and grandmother was brought in to stabilize the system, thus distancing father further from the parenting role.

In the A. Family, grandmother maintained a distance from the problems in the spousal unit. She looked down or away and refused to comment when her daughter tried to involve her in interactions between the spouses. At one point humour was employed to disqualify Mrs. A.'s observations. This was done in an alliance between Mr. A. and grandmother and a complementary position achieved with Mrs. A. one-down. It was a subtle interaction and there was no further evidence to support a coalition of grandmother and son-in-law against mother.

More often, the relationship between Mrs. A. and her mother was symmetrical. They mutually supported each other in their caretaking functions and accepted each other as equals. Mrs. A. asserted her dominance in some household routines; the kitchen was her territory and because it was her place of residence, power was to be distributed 51% - 49% in mother's favour. Grandmother gained the one-up position by protecting her daughter from the boys' teasing and mothering her when she came home tired from work. This may not be an example of over-protectiveness wih a negative intent, but rather a way of giving nurturance. There was little evidence of symmetrical competitiveness and the women rarely argued.

In the B. Family more symmetrical interactions were apparent. Both verbal and non-verbal communication gave evidence of the closeness of the spousal unit. Power and control were more equally shared. The father was highly involved in all aspects of parenting and took great pleasure in his role. Mr. B. shared household responsibilities with the women. Disagreements between the married couple were talked about and resolved; disagreements were minimized in the interactions among the three adults. Grandmother refrained from involving herself in the spousal unit and withdrew when arguments arose.

Interactional patterns indicated symmetrical relationships between the two women and there was no overt competitiveness expressed. Both women were supportive of each other in their functions. Mrs. B. asserts her dominance in the parenting roles, resisting too much help from her mother-in-law. The short term nature of their living arrangement plus the fact that it was to be only temporary, kept conflict from surfacing. Stability was maintained with ease

in this family.

In the C. Family it was evident through responses to questions and interaction patterns that the two women were in the dominant position. Mr. C. was more submissive -- soft-spoken, easy-going and non-argumentative. The women dominated the conversation, often interrupting Mr. C. or talking for him. Between the grandmother and mother the relationship was more symmetrical as indicated by their sharing equally in the conversation and by the confirming style of their responses toward each other. Competitiveness emerged around the issues of child care, but Ms. C. would assert her authority as Craig's parent. Both grandparents respected this and there were no evident power struggles. In the assigned task, interaction was complementary where grandmother took the one-up position of questioning the mother on her plans for part-time work.

Stability exhibited by the B. and C. families was qualitatively different from that shown by the A. Family. Communication in the B. and C. families was more mutually confirming and they expressed more equality in their roles. Stability in the A. Family was maintained by a more rigid adherence to a stereotypical view of family life and roles. Interaction patterns tend to be stable across time. If a family member is of a dominant character, it can be hypothesized that this member will tend to dominate a situation and take control. If a family member is in the more submissive position, authority is not asserted. These roles have repercussions for the effective functioning of the executive subsystem.

Research Question 2

How was the hierarchical structure organized and were boundaries appropriately established and maintained?

Minuchin (1974) emphasizes the hierarchical structure of the family. Hierarchy is defined as the repetitive sequences of who tells whom what to do. Parents and children have different levels of authority and the parents must be in a superior position to the child. A parental subsystem that includes a grandparent can function quite well, as long as lines of responsibility and authority are clearly drawn. The roles of family members as indicated by communication interactions can help determine the executive functioning and hierarchical structure.

In all three families the parents and grandparents were higher in the hierarchy than the children as evidenced on all occasions by interaction patterns. Children were well-behaved, listened carefully and attended to their parent's and/or grandparent's instructions. In the A. and B. families, the children moved freely throughout the house; in the C. family the young grandson stayed with the family throughout the entire interview.

In the A. Family, Mr. A. is dominant in the spousal relationship, but because this family defines child-rearing as the responsibility of the woman, Mr. A. is more removed from the parenting function. He is involved in parenting his two sons by playing with them and teaching them skills. Still, he is supportive of his wife's handling of the child care role, in that, even though he is distant he does not undermine her position. Although more submissive in aspects of their spousal relationship, Mrs. A. takes charge in

maintaining the executive function. In this area she is in the one-up position as the authority, and Mr. A. is in the one-down position.

Grandmother supports the executive function of both parents. During the day she is a "substitute parent," caring for the needs of her grandchildren. Although her "job" is finished when mother returns from work, she continues to share the household chores, lessening the strain on mother. The two women are allied in their shared functions. However, boundaries in this family are more individually established and members tend to be disengaged from each other. Roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated and the operation of the household runs smoothly.

In the B. Family the husband and wife are more accepting of interdependence and operate as a team. They offer a strong parental alliance. The egalitarian nature of their relationship affords little competitiveness or dominance. They do not struggle with issues of who is in charge; they accept their parenting responsibilities equally. Mr. B. is limited because of his work outside of the home and since he is not available, Mrs. B. is "most in charge." Grandmother is supportive of the hierarchy, but she is less involved in child care than the grandmothers in families A. and C. and her style of grandparenting is that of "fun-seeker." There was no evidence of a crossing of generational boundaries. Roles and expectations were clearly delineated and boundaries were permeable.

Mother and grandmother are the dominant ones in the C. Family in their relationship to Mr. C., but between themselves the relationship is symmetrical. They all share equally in the responsibilities around child care. The C. Family grandparents are young

in age, which may partially explain their willingness to continue in a parenting role. It was also obvious that family members enjoy each other and appreciate the value in living together. As grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. C. are also substitute parents, though the hierarchy is clear that Ms. C. is ultimately in charge as mother. They support her position of authority. Boundaries are permeable and although roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated, there is much flexibility.

Research Question 3

On the basis of the family's interactional communication pattern, what rules can be inferred about the multigenerational family's interactional system?

As rule-governed systems, the subject families adapted to three generations residing together. In all three families the grandparent system supported the parental subsystem. The hierarchy of authority clearly descended from the parental subsystem, although roles were more nearly equal in the C. Family. In the A. Family, grandmother supported the parental unit and was more closely involved with it because she did the household and care-taking chores with the mother, father being more distant. Boundaries between parents and children and grandparents and children were clearly delineated. There were no coalitions or crossing of generational boundaries causing problems for the three families involved. In all three family systems rules supported the stability and well-functioning of the child-rearing function.

Rules appeared to be consistent throughout the time the families

have been together, especially in Family C. Because the single-parent mother had never moved away from home, there had been no major reorganization of the family structure. Rules in the A. Family supported a more traditionally defined marriage and family. Rules in the B. and C. Families generally allowed flexibility, encouraged self-expression and valued humour. Rules in the B. Family were the most flexible because of the short period of time in which they have been together. All three families valued family time which included all generations.

Summary of Findings

The aim of this research was to examine multigenerational families, residing in one household, who defined themselves as successful in this style of living. The literature indicates the importance of a clear hierarchical structure in such a family arrangement (Minuchin, 1974; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). Evidence from findings in this study show clarity of the hierarchical structure in terms of the parents and grandparents being higher in the structure than the children and clearly in charge of them. Boundaries between sibling subsystems were clear and parents or grandparents did not intrude. In all three families there was no evidence of the grandparents joining with the grandchildren against the parents or of the parents joining with the children against the grandparents. There were no dysfunctional coalitions or crossing of generational lines in these circumstances. Minuchin (1974) states that extended families can function quite well as long as responsibilities are clearly allocated, boundaries are clear and there is no

pathological crossing of generational boundaries.

The findings indicate that in Families B. and C. there was support of the grandparent generation for the authority of the parents. In Family A., findings indicate a coalition of mother and grandmother, with father kept more distant in terms of the parenting function. The literature supports that in families with young children, the wife may be caught in conflicting demands for her time and loyalty and the husband may move for disengagement (Minuchin and Fishman, 1981). This appeared most true in the A. Family where Mr. A. was more distant in the parenting function and Mrs. A. was dependent on her own mother for support. This is consistent with the findings of Cohler and Grunebaum (1981) that a young mother may turn to her own mother for "emotional refuelling" and security due to the stresses of parenthood and spousal relationships. A more functional situation would be created by moving father towards the children and mother, re-engaging him in parental functions and helping him to build a more complex differentiated view of himself in the spouse and parent subsystem (Minuchin and Fishman, 1981). If the problem is poorly resolved, cross-generational coalitions will continue. The mother could unite more strongly with the grandmother against her spouse, keeping him peripheral or making him overcontrol.

When the boundary around the spousal subsystem is not clearly established this can result in further separation of the spousal unit. Therefore, in the A. Family where father was more distant in the parenting function, the spousal subsystem needed to be supported and strengthened. By encouraging mother to re-involve father, more functional behaviour would be possible. The concer is to delineate

boundaries among three people if dysfunctional dyadic transactions are maintained by the entrance of a third person as detourer, ally, helper or judge (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). This support of the spousal and parental subsystem would aim at increasing both the psychological distance between mother and grandmother and the proximity between spouses. Tasks to keep the proximity of the couple could be assigned.

Implications for Counselling

Families who are living multigenerationally, particularly if they have been forced by circumstances to do so, can experience considerable stress. In counselling families, family therapists need to attend to the needs of the entire family. A systems or interactional view always implies that any particular behaviour or person must not be viewed in isolation from the behaviours of other family members of the system (Bach, 1980). Therefore, information is gathered from the family as a whole in order to view the family's structure and observe persistent patterns of interaction. Also, all generations are legitimate family members. There is no one model of healthy behaviour regarding the degree or quality of intergenerational involvement. Therapeutic goals depend on the ages and stages of all family members, the family's unique style and their social and cultural context.

The structural school, exemplified by Minuchin (1974), works from the assessment of subsystems and subsystem boundaries. Change is effected through restructuring manoeuvres, including manipulating space, joining operations, confronting and strengthening boundaries.

The present research, based on the structural theory of Minuchin, implies counselling interventions which might be implemented to promote more functional development.

Firstly, in considering the problems of families including three or more generations when young or adolescent children are in the home, recognition must be made regarding hierarchy. According to the structuralist approach the counsellor must first assess the family and ensure a single hierarchical organization, with the parents in a superior position to the child. Grandparents must be supportive of the parental subsystem and its executive function so there are no coalitions of grandparent/grandchild against parents or of grandparent/parent against a second parent. Counselling interventions might include the following. The counsellor might side with the parental subsystem and block undue interference to alter the structure. Important, as well, would be the strengthening of the spousal subsystem to ensure that the spouses share areas of control and responsibility.

Secondly, in terms of the adult generations, the counsellor needs to determine what is appropriate family disengagement and individual self-differentiation. This is often more pertinent for women who may be more locked into their roles as wives and mothers and need support in determining identity issues. Also, they may need to assess appropriate family closeness and intervene to bring members closer, particularly fathers who may be more detached from the parenting function.

Thirdly, altering family rules changes the structure of the family. Simply having all members talk about concerns or express

opinions with each other can open the way for change. Counselling can facilitate and modify rules which are rigid, adding flexibility to the system.

Lastly, the counsellor's task is one of helping generations to accept the significance of their continuing relationship rather than fostering an artificial autonomy that is inconsistent with the reality of intergenerational relations in contemporary urban society (Cohler & Grunebaum, 1981). Some theorists call for the support of interdependence stating that our culture is highly individualistic and values independence, but at various times in the life cycle individuals may need additional support (Boszormeny-Nagy & Spark, 1973). Young parents in the expansive phase of the life cycle, may be faced with problems and pressures connected with parenting and establishment of a new home. The support of a grandparent generation needs to be validated in terms of the strengths it can offer. An exploration of family strengths is essential rather than highlighting deficits.

Implications for Future Research

This study was exploratory in nature and hypothesis generating, therefore, it offers added areas for further research. The strengths a multigenerational family offers need to be further explored, particularly, the value it affords the single-parent family, either a young unmarried woman or teenager or a divorced single-parent. Studies of minority groups have emphasized the importance of extended family living for economic reasons and qualitative values. Cultural myths often ascribe negative connotations to the extended family experience and further research to examine its innovative and supportive

qualities is needed. Macklin and Rubin (1983) determined that there are characteristics and strengths of living with the extended family which cannot be met by government or social agencies. Therefore, research into functional extended families, their structure and characteristics would be instrumental in finding ways to support families and their unity rather than taking over services they provide.

A longitudinal study approach, examining the stages families go through in accommodating to the introduction of a third generation would be valuable in providing information for counselling implications.

Since research has studied the inter-relationships among female members in such extended families, particularly the mother-grandmother relationship, an examination from the perspective of the males in such households would generate added information on this type of living arrangement for grandfathers and husbands, providing a more indepth study of their roles, particularly as they pertain to parenting.

Experts often argue that there is no function for the aged in an industrialized society (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Additional research is needed to examine the roles, functions and strengths of the grandparent to the grandchild at all levels and to determine the importance of each generation to the other. This applies as well to the adult child in relationship to his/her own parents. Hagestad (1981) encourages an examination of adult relationships across the entire life span, particularly for individuals aged 20-40 years. This is an area in which there is little research. The process of adults aging and becoming peers with their own parents is little understood.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study are as follows. Firstly, a delimitation was that the many variables of family systems functioning were measured only once. Important data can be gained from a small sampling of family interaction, but usually requires many observations. A study conducted over a longer period of time may have generated more valuable information (Craig & Metze, 1979). Secondly, although the interviews took place in each family's home, the situation was different from the family's normal experience. Results, also can be limited due to the emotional climate in the household at the time of the study. Respondents may also reply in a manner which they feel is helpful or more socially acceptable, limiting the validity of this data. Because the subject families volunteered to participate in this study, responses might have been different from families less willing to participate (Brandt, 1981).

Limitations

The present research was affected by a number of limitations. Firstly, in the case study approach, the results of the study are relevant for the three subject families only. No substantive or generalized findings about families were obtained. Secondly, video-taped family interactions, analyzed by two or more trained raters, would have increased the validity of this research. Lastly, the involvement of the children provided much valuable information, but it may have been more beneficial to have structured a two-part interview to allow time alone with the adult family members.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I am interested in learning more about how families get along together and in the situations you have encountered as a result of your experiences of living in a multigenerational household. I am specifically interested in how you organize yourselves around the looking after of young children.

This is how I would like to begin. First, I will be asking you questions. Please respond as you would like. If there are any questions you do not wish to discuss, your wishes will be respected. Unless I make a point of asking a specific individual, these questions will be asked of the entire family and not one person in particular, so any or all of you can answer or comment on others' answers. If the children need attending to, please feel free to do what is necessary. Also, the children are welcome to play here and to wander in and out as they wish.

To begin with, I would like to get an idea of your family and some basic background information.

I. Family Data and Background

age and sex of family members
educational level
occupation (full or part-time)
marital status and years married
ethnic background
religion
total family income

II. Background to becoming a multigenerational household

1) Does anyone else live in your household besides the people who are here?

2) How long have you been living together as a unit?

3) Is this living arrangement, at this time, considered to be temporary or permanent?

4) What is the physical arrangement of your household?
i.e. Are there areas that you share in common and areas that are

strictly private? What would these be? Is there a separate 'mother's-in-law' suite?

5) What were the circumstances leading to your family living together? (Financial, babysitting, widowhood, unemployment, illness, divorce, unmarried motherhood?)
Who initiated this coming together?
How did you feel about this decision?

6) How much childcare does grandmother/father do? How many hours per day on the average?

7) Is there a history of multigenerational family living in any of your family backgrounds?

III. The area that I want to focus on is that of childrearing and how this is shared in a multigenerational household.

1) Firstly, how would you describe yourselves as a family? What is your family like?

2) What is your daily weekly routine with the children? (What is the involvement of the adults in this routine? What are the roles? What is the division of labour? How are the parenting chores handled? How was this worked out?)

What is the weekend routine or how does it differ from the weekday routine?

3) Specifically, how do you as a family handle the following:

a. Regarding children's chores. What chores do they do? What happens if they do not do them? What do you do? Who is responsible to see that the chores get done?

b. If the children want to go off with friends to visit or do activities, what arrangements are made? Who handles this? How do the children seek permission? Who do they ask? Do their friends come to your house? How do you handle this? How do you handle any problems re: noise, fighting, messiness, chores, etc.?

4) What happens following the parents return from work? What is the first thing he/she does? What does the grandparent do when they return home? What do the children do? How do they react? What do the parents do with the children? What do the grandparents

and children do together? Is there anything that is specially yours to do with them?

5) What about certain routines around meals or bedtime?

Meals: Is supper time a common meal? Who teaches the children table manners? What kinds of table manners do you expect? What happens if the children act up? What do you do then? If the children do not like what has been prepared, what happens? Is this agreeable to all the adults? If you differ, in what ways do you differ? How do you handle these differences?

Bedtime: What time do the children go to bed? Who gets them to bed? What is the routine? What happens if they refuse to go or want to get up? Who is more firm about the bedtime routine?

6) Discipline. What are the rules in your household? What are the methods of discipline you use? Do you all agree with this? Are there any problems which have arisen from disciplining the children? Who in your family does the most reprimanding?

7) What do the adults do after the children are in bed? Chores? Relaxation? What happens if husband and wife want to go out? What are babysitting arrangements?

8) Grandparent(s), how do you see your place in this household? Do you wish you had more privacy? What about your own needs (friendships, personal time and space, spiritual....)?

IV. General questions re: childcare roles.

We've talked about the routines in your household and before we finish, I would like to ask these more general questions.

1) How would you compare the ways in which you are raising your children with the way in which your mother and father reared you? Discipline, manners, behaviour, social skills? What are the similarities and the differences?

2) How do you resolve your differences in child-rearing? Are there things that you all do that some of you would wish were not done? Examples. Are there some things which you would like to see happen or to see changed?

3) As parents, what kinds of advice do you ask from your own parents regarding the rearing of children?
4) Do you, the grandparents, ever talk with mother and father about any concerns you may have about the way they are raising their children?
5) Grandparents, do the children ever come to you, say, for permission or requests for something, rather than the parents? How do you deal with this?
7) Relationships. (To the husband) How do you see the relationship between your wife and grandparents; between your wife and children; between the grandparents and children?
(To the wife) How do you see the relationship between your husband and grandparents; husband and children; grandparents and children?
(To the grandparents) How do you see the relationship between your daughter (-in-law) and son (-in-law); daughter (-in-law) and children; son (-in-law) and children?
(Include any other variations)

V. General questions re: the family

1) Are there some things you do as a family group? What would these be? What do you as a couple do? What are the social relationships between the adults? How do you spend your time privately?
2) Every family has arguments and disagreements. What kinds of arguments does your family have? Are there any that are reoccuring?
Which two people in your family argue the most?
Which two people in your family argue the least?
How do you resolve family arguments or disagreements?
3) What gives you pleasure, satisfaction in this household?
What are the benefits to your living together? What have you had to sacrifice? What are the advantages and disadvantages to this style of living?
4) What words of advice would you have for families who are forced through circumstances to live together or who choose to live together in this manner?

VI. Concluding remarks

1) Are there some other things about how things are going now in your family which we should know in order to get the best picture of what things are like in your household?

2) Are there any questions you would like to ask me about this interview and study?

3) Do you have any comments you would like to share with me about what this interview was like for you?

APPENDIX B

TASK

VIII. Task

I am going to move out of this area and sit over at the back. I would like you to discuss the following. I will be observing your interactions and may do some note-taking. Most people say they feel a little nervous at first, and this is a normal response.

I would like you to discuss a concern or problem you have with the children or something you would like to see changed. You may have one that comes to mind immediately or you may need to take some time to think of one. Please feel free to take the time you need. You may all come up with a different concern so decide which one concern you would like to focus on today. Then discuss it to see what kind of resolution you can reach or where this will lead you.

When you feel you are done, please notify me that you are finished. Otherwise, I will stop the proceedings after 10 minutes. It is not essential that you come to some sort of resolution at this time.

Do you have any questions you would like to ask before I leave?

Question upon my return: How did it feel to you to do this? Do you have any comments you would like to share with me about how this was for you?

APPENDIX C

INFORMATIONAL LETTER

9833 - 79 Street
Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta
T8L 3G9

Dear Sir or Madame:

I am a graduate student with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Department of Educational Psychology, at the University of Alberta, and am currently working on my Masters Thesis. I am interested in learning more about families and particularly in the experiences of those families living in a multigenerational household.

My study requires meeting with four families -- one family to be involved with the pilot study and three families to be involved with the actual research. I am hoping to meet with the pilot study family within the next month and the research families within the month following. The criteria for these families is listed on the following page.

I would be most grateful for any assistance which you might be able to offer in helping me to contact such families. I would also be most interested in talking with you about this study in greater detail, should you require.

If you have any questions or concerns, or any information to pass along, please phone me at 998-7113. This is a Fort Saskatchewan number and is not long distance.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Griffiths
Graduate Student
University of Alberta

VOLUNTEER FAMILIES REQUIRED FOR RESEARCH STUDY

I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta and am interested in learning more about families who are living multigenerationally.

I require the assistance of four families. For the purpose of this study the families must be:

-- a three-generation family living in one household.
This can include:
-- both grandparents or one grandparent
-- both parents or a single parent
-- one or more children under the age of eight years

Families interested in being involved with this study will participate in an interview arranged at their convenience in their own home. The total time requirement for the interview is 1½ hours.

All information is strictly confidential.

Persons interested or wanting more information, may contact me at 998-7113.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Dorothy Griffiths
Graduate Student
University of Alberta

Dr. D.D. Sawatzky: Supervisor

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORMS

Consent Form

We agree to participate in a study as described and conducted by Dorothy Griffiths, a graduate student in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Educational Psychology Department, University of Alberta.

We understand that the interview will be recorded on audiotape and that the tape will be erased after the study is completed. We understand that we will not be identified by name and that specific information which could be used for identification will not be included in the research report. Only those persons directly involved in the study will have access to confidential information.

Date _____ Signature _____

Parental Consent for Child

We, _____ and _____,

the parents of _____, give permission for our child to participate in an interview with Dorothy Griffiths, a graduate student in the Faculty of Graduate Studies, Educational Psychology Department, University of Alberta.

We understand that the information he/she provides will be used for a Master's thesis and will be treated as confidential.

Date _____ Signatures _____

_____